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The  
Lakes Country

by ARCH MERRILL



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# FOREWORD

*One remembers the English lake country for charm of beauty, restorative power for tired bodies, jaded nerves, and restless minds. Beyond all this he cherishes its contribution to English letters. Men lived and wrote beside these mountain-encircled waters. Just so the Finger Lakes, Conesus, Hemlock, Canadice, Honeoye, Canandaigua, Seneca, Keuka "old Indian lakes, with names like liquid music," hold our affection. Fascinating for geological study, satisfying in beauty, recreative in quiet serenity, the lakes have special significance because men here on their bordering hillsides have entered richly into the abundant experiment of making a life.*

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*And we are indeed fortunate that one who understands men, trusts them, and truly likes them has gone to meet the lakes and the people. And because they had for him a like goodwill for that he always carries in his heart they told him gladly their well treasured lore.*

*Discriminating and honest collector, keen observer, incisive reporter, word artist, fascinating teller of tales, Arch Merrill makes live again in this volume, the days of yesterday. Here you shall hear "the voice of the lake," and stalk a "mystic countryside," come upon a "chosen place," sense stimulation through learning, stand beside the "cradle of aviation" meet a "lovely vixen" and a "vineyard Queen." So shall you also find a good companion through The Lakes Country.*

JOHN ADAMS LOWE





# Slim Fingers Beckon

**I**N the time of falling leaves, the fingers of the slim, blue lakes beckon almost imperiously.

Their call is an old one. It is clearest when borne on the crisp winds of autumn; when vagrant wispy clouds play hide and seek with a wan moon; when the sumac flares its brightest red on the rocky hills.

The Red Men knew well the voices of the lakes—the dull boom of the mysterious guns that spoke out of watery depths—the musical tinkle of tumbling waters—the lapping of the waves on shores where crackled their ancient council fires.

For the palefaces, too, there are echoes from the past—the tread of a conquering, destroying army—the ring of settlers' axes—the hoarse whistle of old steamboats whose wheels have long been still.

In October, I answered the call of the lakes whose very names are liquid music: Seneca and Canandaigua and Keuka, and those four lovely Little Finger Lakes that do not belong to the Big Six and that lie in Rochester's own backyard: Conesus, Hemlock, Canadice and Honeoye.

I came, I saw and I was conquered by the charm of the Lakes Country—as have been thousands of others since the beginning.

\* \* \* \* \*



It is a land of ribbon waterways, set in parallel valleys, bright jewels in a diadem of beauty. It is a land of picturesque waterfalls, romantic glens, deep gorges, mineral springs, and eerie caverns. It is the land of the Burning Spring and the Eternal Flame, of the Lake Guns, of the Painted Rocks, of the Senecas' Sacred Hill.

Across the stage of its history have strode powerful and fantastic figures: Red Jacket, the Demosthenes of the Senecas; Queen Catharine Montour, Jemima Wilkinson, the Universal Friend; Charles Williamson, the great land agent; Bob Ingersoll, the silver tongued infidel; Sullivan, the Yankee warrior who laid waste the proud Seneca villages, one by one; Glenn Curtiss, pioneer of the skyways—and many, many more.

On the site of old Indian towns that Sullivan put to the torch in 1779, the White Men have built two stately cities, drenched in history and busy centers of trade. On the shores of the slim blue lakes also stand prosperous villages and tree-shaded hamlets, vast summer colonies, colleges and memorials of the past.

To this Lakes Country for years tourists have flocked from afar. Its beauty is known all over the world. It has been called "The Switzerland of America." The wide paved roads that wind around the lakes were once Indian trails and later they echoed to the rumble of the old stage coaches. When peace returns, they again will be choked with long lines of automobiles, bearing the license plates of many states.

This countryside reaches its pinnacle of beauty in the time of the harvest moon. Then the Bristol Hills are ablaze with rainbow hues. The grapes ripen on the sunkissed slopes of Keuka; old Bare Hill rears its somber head amid a riot of color. All along the slim, blue lakes, there is a smell of burning leaves and the winds of a dying season flick the placid waters like a horseman's whip—and murmur tales of the long ago.

\* \* \* \* \*

These narrow lakes were once rivers. That was comforting to a confirmed River Rambler, switching from his Genesee.

It was millions of years ago that the lakes were swiftly flowing rivers. So say the learned men who have read the Record of the Rocks.

According to the geologists, eons ago there arose out of the receding Devonian sea a plain that stretched from Canada across the Genesee Country and sloped gently southward.

Through this plain, years of erosion carved out valleys and in them coursed the primitive, southward flowing rivers. The ridges that stand today between the 21 parallel valleys reaching from the Tonawanda to the Oneida are merely the remnants of that ancient Devonian plain.

Later the river flow was diverted northward, through the changing contour of the land, into the great stream that was moulding the Ontarian Valley. This became an inland sea and the focus of drainage for a vast area.

Then came the Ice Age. Tons of glacial debris dammed the northward flowing rivers. The imprisoned waters became the lakes of our Western New York countryside.

I was glad to learn that. For in following the lakes, I would still, in a sense, be a River Rambler. And the Lakes Country was in the beginning considered part of the Genesee Country.

On this jaunt, with the exception of the west shore of Seneca Lake and the Keuka region, I followed the march of Sullivan's men. I saw so many tablets and other memorials along the way that I am wondering if I could not qualify as an honorary member of the Sons of the Sullivan Expedition. I have never heard of such an organization. But there must be one. There are sons of everything else under the sun.

Incidentally, this swing around the lakes was not accomplished on foot. There are too many lakes and they encompass too much territory. I did not care to be walking through the post-war world. So I used available means of transportation, which meant private automobile as long as the coupons lasted, (they survived Conesus, Hemlock, Canadice and Honeoye) and public bus the rest of the way.

There were times when I envied Sullivan's foot soldiers.

The weather was not all that could be desired. But neither rain nor fog nor snow nor wind nor leaden skies can dim the glory of the Lakes Country.





# Summer Siren

**T**HE voice of the slim, blue lake that the Indians named Conesus is a carefree and a persuasive one.

A siren of the summertime, Conesus calls: "Come

and fish and swim in my blue-green waters. Come and romp upon my beaches. Come and wander through my hills."

And between the first bugles of Memorial Day morn and the setting sun of Labor Day, nearly 5,000 heed the call.

For years Conesus has been the summer playground for Rochester and the Genesee Valley.

Its 18 miles of leafy shore, from Lakeville at its foot to the historic Cedar Swamp at its head and back again, are lined with summer cottages. There are pretentious stucco residences at Eagle Point which got its name long ago from the two lordly birds that nested there. There also are three-room cabins that humble men built with hard earned dollars carefully put aside so that they, too, might be masters of a "Rest-a-While" or "Bide-a-Wee" on Conesus.

The theme song of the peaceful, hill-girt lake that is nearest to Rochester's southern door is "In the Good Old Summertime."

Come Memorial Day and the whole lakeside is astir with life and color, with rollicking voices and gaily clad cottagers. Motorboats skim the clear waters, dodging the boats of the patient fishermen. Sweating golfers toil up the steep sides of Cottonwood to

drive balls off a veritable mountain and to admire one of the grandest views in all the state.

By night the clatter of the roller skates at McPherson's Point echoes across the narrow water to join with the music of the dance at Long Point where cottagers and rural folk mingle as did their fathers and mothers in another day.

That, of course, is the peacetime picture. Conesus has seen other wartimes. She knows this grim period is but an interlude.

Even in wartime the call of Conesus could not be denied. It was there in the midst of the pleasure driving ban that the number-takers of the OPA made their richest hauls.

Conesus is a flower that bursts open at the zenith of the spring and folds its petals with the first chill breath of autumn.

Come Labor Day and one hears the bang of hammers boarding up cottage windows and farewells that always include a "see you next summer." Then in the twilight the roads are choked with homeward bound automobiles.

For more than half a century it has been like that. Only in horse and buggy days, the steamboats hauled the cottagers and their belongings down to Lakeville where the Erie train was waiting at the water's edge.

Gone are the days when a 20-coach Sunday excursion train would roll in from Rochester; when the McPherson would steam majestically around the lake with 1,000 merrymakers aboard; gone are the days of the boat captains, Dan Walkley and Melvin Durkee and Jule Blackmon and Bill Carnes.

Three decades ago, the horn of the automobile whizzing along smooth paved roads sounded the knell of the steamboats and the excursion trains.

Long before the coming of the white man, the Indians yielded to the charm of Conesus and hunted and fished and built their villages and planted their crops along its shores. Those shores have echoed to the tramp of an invading army in buff and blue and have



felt the glow of martial camp fires. They have heard the rattle of musketry, savage war whoops, the whizz of flying arrows, the screams of dying soldiers. They have been stained with the blood of a little band of patriots, trapped in ambushade.

But that grim chapter was written long ago and in the later years it may be truly said of Conesus:

"All her ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace."

\* \* \* \* \*

The last of the lake boat captains was trying to burn a pile of leaves in a cold October drizzle at Lakeville Park the day I visited Conesus, the first of the seven slim, blue lakes on my calling list.

William Carnes has lived all of his 72 years at the foot of Conesus Lake. His father ran the long, low inn across the road back in Civil War days when the mail stages rattled down the hill from Livonia.

Bill Carnes is slightly built but wiry and agile. He did not seem to mind the drizzle as he gazed upon the mist-shrouded waters he had sailed for 16 years as a boat engineer and captain.

His blue eyes were alight as he spoke of the McPherson of which he once was skipper.

"She was the biggest boat on the lake. She was a beauty, a three-decker, 110 feet long and she had a six-man crew. Her capacity was 1,000 passengers. But I have seen 1,400 aboard her on a Sunday when there was a big excursion from Rochester. The fare was 50 cents round trip and that included a boat ride around the lake. As captain, I would help take up the tickets but I always took the wheel to steer her into the docks. That was no easy job."

Carnes told of the night more than 35 years ago when the McPherson caught fire and burned to the water's edge. He had brought her into the pier at Lakeville that night. She had steam up, ready for the next morning's run. The captain had glanced out of the window of his home and saw the big ship ablaze. It was too late to save her.

"Luckily her safety valve worked. Otherwise there might have been an explosion and people killed, for a crowd gathered after the blaze lit up the sky for miles around," Carnes recalled.

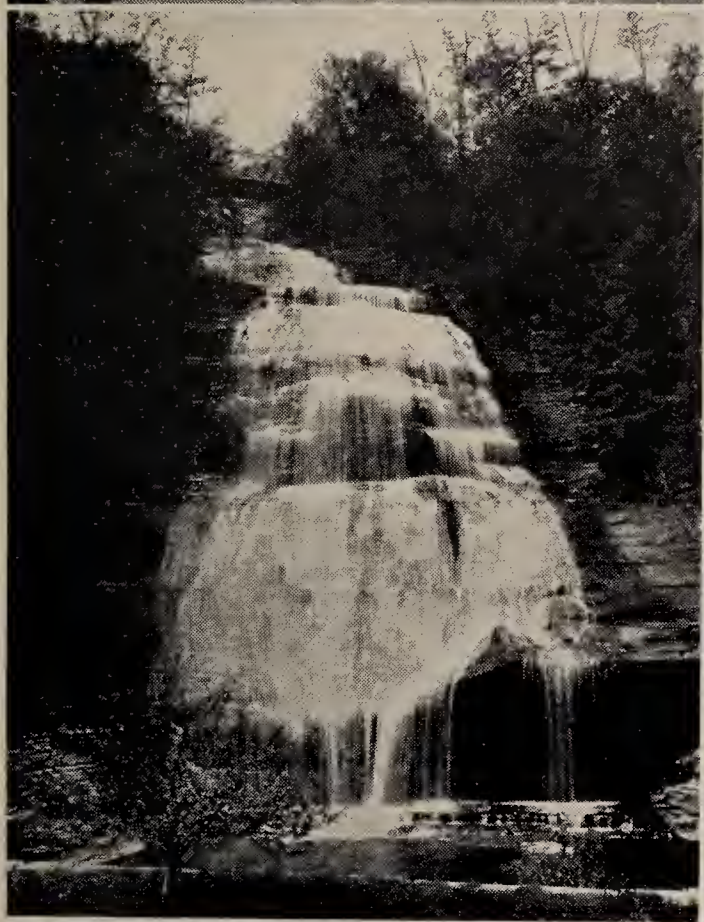
He told of the other boats that once plied the lake, of the Minnehaha, a sailboat, first on Conesus, 65 years ago; of the first steamboat, the Jessie; of Dan Walkley's Alice M., that was converted into a gasoline launch and wound up its days at Silver Lake; of the steamer H. D. Jaeger, named after the general passenger agent of the Erie; of the speed launch, the Cyclone, that burned; of the Rochester, another gasoline burner; of the J. A. Ritz; of his own ferry, the G. A. Thompson, and of the Conesus, the two-decker flat-bottomed excursion boat owned by Walter Strowger.

Their heyday was in the late '90s and the early days of the new century. Those were the summers when the Erie ran a commuters' train from Rochester to Conesus Lake for the benefit of the cottagers. When the hands of the clock in the old Erie Station tower pointed to 5 p. m. and the mighty, far-reaching whistle of the Kimball tobacco factory, with its poised figure of Mercury, confirmed the hour, there was a rush to board the train for Lakeville. There steamboats met all trains and took the commuters to the dock nearest their cottages. In the morning the boat and the train would bring them back to the city and their daily routines.

Sundays, two excursion trains ran to the lake, which an old "ad" of 1903 proclaimed to be "a delightful resort, the right place to take your family on an outing, with a fine beach for bathing and the best fishing in the state." One train left at 9:30 a. m. and another around noon. And the 50-cent round trip fare included a "boat ride around picturesque Conesus Lake." Pleasures were simpler—and less costly—in those days.

When the rain came down so hard he could no longer tend his leaf fire, Carnes took me to his boathouse, filled with a half century's accumulation of boat parts, fishing tackle and other miscellany. Two items he particularly treasures. One is a faded framed





*Upper Left, Tranquil Keuka; Upper Right, Races at Hemlock's World Fair; Center Left, Montour's Tumbling Waters; Center Right, Curtiss, Sky Pioneer; Below, Hill-Girt Honeoye.*





picture of the SS. McPherson in all her triple-decked glory. The other was a certificate, also framed, which testified that William Carnes was licensed by the state as a boat engineer and pilot. "Only three such combination licenses were issued," he said proudly. The date was Sept. 1, 1897, and the signature was that of George W. Aldridge, state superintendent of public works, and long-time Republican boss of Rochester.

Since the fadeout of the steamboats, Carnes has operated Lakeville Park, amusement resort at the foot of the lake. He has seen many changes there. It is still a gay place in summer. The old pier and docks are gone. No longer do the Erie tracks run down to the water's edge. The two huge ice houses which employed 800 men at the peak of the winter harvest, have vanished, one through fire.

In Rochester I looked up another old timer who knew the lore of the lake boats. His name is Timothy Brennan. He also is 72. He was born on the east shore of Conesus Lake, three miles south of Lakeville. As a young man he worked on the boats, coming to live in Rochester in 1916 after the last steamboat whistle echoed over Conesus waters. Now retired, he was engineer at the Elks Club for 24 years.

Brennan, with a reminiscent glow in his kindly Irish blue eyes, recalled the days and nights of the moonlight excursions and the square dances and the bands of the lake boats. Every Sunday in summer the 54th Regiment Band, under the baton of stalwart Fred Zeitler, would play aboard the Conesus. That gasoline-propelled flat boat with two decks was owned and operated by Walter Strowger, who helped promote the dial telephone invented by his uncle, Almon B. Strowger of Rochester. Walter became a big operator around Conesus. He bought the old Avon Cure, a sanitarium during Avon's heyday as a health resort, tore it down and moved it in sections to McPherson's Point. There it was reassembled and still stands as the rambling four-story, weatherbeaten Livingston Inn.

Brennan recalled how the lumber was brought from Avon to Lakeville by freight gondolas and then shipped by boat up to the Point.

He told of the first hotel on the lake, Jerry Bolles' Lake View House, at Cedar Crest, a favorite rendezvous of 40 years ago. The old hotel, for a time the summer home of C. C. Woodworth, Rochester perfumery manufacturer, now is part of the main building of Stella Maris, Catholic boys' camp.

Brennan recalled that Phil Farley's present Excelsior Springs Hotel on the far east side of the lake was built as a water cure because of the mineral springs nearby.

Of all the captains and the crews of the old lake boats, Bill Carnes and Tim Brennan are about the only ones left.

Dr. Richard J. Decker, Rochester dentist, recalls the summers 40 years ago when, in his youth, he was one of the crew of the good ship Conesus.

All the boats have disappeared from the scene. The bow of the J. A. Ritz, I was told, is now part of a pig pen on a hillside farm overlooking the lake it once rode so proudly. Even the old docks have rotted away.

The Ackers, the late Frank Acker and his son, Carroll, have operated a general store at Lakeville for 80 years. Carroll Acker is no cracker-barrel, cross-roads storekeeper. A widely traveled, abreast-of-the-times businessman, he speaks as familiarly of the Saguenay and Mexico City as he does of Pebble Beach or Old Orchard Point.

From his own memories and from tales he heard from older men of the community, he recounted a fund of lake lore. And he had a chest full of old pictures that told graphically of the changing scene around Conesus.

Lakeville once was a thriving village in its own right and not so dependent upon the summer trade. In 1821, when Livingston County was formed, Lakeville was a formidable rival of haughty Geneseo for the county seat.



It once had a salt well near the depot, an important industry in its day. The plant burned down in 1885 and never was rebuilt.

There was a picture of the picturesque old mill wheel near the bridge at the outlet beside an old pump factory—a sylvan scene erased by the hand of time.

Pre-World War I days were brought to mind by a “shot” of a seaplane, one of the fleet of Walter Johnson, a pupil of Glenn Curtiss, who around 1913 operated a flying school on the lake.

Ice fishing, ice harvests, old steamboats—they were all in the Acker cavalcade of Conesus history. And there was “Cluny Castle” at Pebble Beach, a glorified boathouse, first cottage built on the lake.

The merchant mentioned Billy Sandow and his camp near McPherson’s Point where Strangler Lewis and other noted wrestlers trained. Sandow still is a resident of Conesus Lake.

\* \* \* \* \*

The name Conesus first appears as that of a legendary Indian chief who lived on an island in the Genesee River near Avon. His military prowess is glorified by W. C. H. Hosmer, the Bard of Avon (N. Y.) in his “Yonnondio,” ballad of love and war in a bygone century. Many of the scenes of that poem are laid around Conesus waters.

In a primitive time the Indians built a mound-like fortification near the outlet of the lake that they called Gahn-yuh-sas, from the sheep berries that grew along its shores. When the whites came, they found vestiges of this old fort.

In the 18th Century a Seneca village of a score of log houses, stood amid apple and peach orchards and fields of corn at the head of the lake.

In September, 1779, General Sullivan’s expedition, sent out by George Washington to lay waste the lands of the Senecas in the Genesee Country in retaliation for the savages’ attacks on frontier settlements, marched over the hills from Hemlock Lake, and came

upon this village. All its inhabitants had fled, leaving a rich crop of corn standing in the fields.

The Yankees destroyed the village and the crops and encamped nearby for the night. It was from that base that a scouting party of 26 men under young Lieut. Thomas Boyd was sent out to reconnoiter the principal Seneca village on the present site of Cuylerville. It was called Little Beardstown or "the Genesee Castle."

The little band was observed near Williamsburg, by two Indians, one of whom fell before the deadly repeating gun of a fabulous scout named Timothy Murphy. The other brave escaped and spread the alarm. Hastily Boyd's party retraced its steps to the camp. Only a mile from Sullivan's base at the head of Conesus Lake, the Senecas and their Tory allies, under the ruthless Walter Butler, lay in ambush in a wooded ravine. There was a sharp, brief struggle. The Yankees were hopelessly outnumbered. Fifteen fell on the spot. Boyd and Sergeant Michael Parker were captured and taken to Genesee Castle. There, after they had refused to divulge any of Sullivan's campaign plans, they were tortured to death.

Out in the fields on a little hillock overlooking the ravine of the ambuscade, a mile from the west shore of the lake and a short distance from Gray's Five Corners, stands a plain, white shaft, surrounded by an iron fence. It was erected by the Livingston County Historical Society to mark the spot of one of the few engagements ever fought on Genesee Country soil. As I stood on that historic Groveland Hill, in the most peaceful countryside imaginable, it was hard to realize it once had resounded to savage war cries and the din of battle.

When Sullivan's men took up the march again, they had to build a bridge across the swamp at the head of the lake. There is a legend that still persists around Conesus that they discarded a three-pound brass cannon in the marsh there. When Lee surrendered at Appomatox in 1865, the people of Lakeville heard firing in the south. The rumor spread that the old Revolutionary gun had



been recovered and was speaking again after all these years. Investigation showed a blacksmith and his anvil were responsible for the cannonading. But every few years searching parties still go out into the Cedar Swamp looking for Sullivan's discarded cannon.

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Under two lofty cedars in the old Union Cemetery near Scottsburg, south of the head of the lake, is a shiny granite marker. On it is the inscription:

CAPT. DANIEL SHAYS, 1747-1825

Remember Shays' Rebellion in your history book?

After the Revolution, as in the wake of every war fought upon this earth, came a financial depression. It was especially felt in western Massachusetts, where settlers, many of them soldiers of the Revolution, were losing their homes, being thrown into jail for debt and generally having a hard time of it because of the depreciated national currency and the chaotic times.

These Bay Staters organized in armed revolt against "the Boston bankers" who owned most of the war bonds. Their leader was a Daniel Shays, a captain with a gallant war record, who had fought at Bunker Hill and charged with Mad Anthony Wayne at Stony Point. There is evidence that he was "drafted" into leadership and was not fundamentally a man of violence.

In 1786 Shays appeared in Springfield at the head of 1,600 men and prevented the Supreme Court of Massachusetts from sitting. The next year he led his disgruntled band again to Springfield and tried to seize the arsenal. This time the militia was ready. They fired on the mob which dispersed in wild disorder. Shays fled to Vermont and his rebellion was over. Although he was a fugitive with a price of 150 pounds on his head, he was pardoned.

He left New England and after a brief sojourn near Cayuga Lake, came to the Conesus region in 1814, a man of 67. With his war pension, he bought a farm and built a log house. Then he married a young widow of some means. Pioneers remembered

Shays as a short, stout, rather garrulous, old veteran, with a liking for strong drink. He died at the age of 78 and was laid to rest in the old Union Cemetery in his uniform of buff and blue.

The simple marker of creek stone above his grave deteriorated with the passing years until the inscription could hardly be deciphered. Within the last few years the Livingston Historical Society placed the present marker at the last resting place of the famous rebel against the authority of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1814 a lad of 14, big for his years, with long, fair hair, a chubby face and a bland, disarming smile that was to stand him in good stead in his future career, came from his home near Skaneateles, on foot most of the way, to work as an apprentice in a cloth dressing establishment near Scottsburg. His employer put him to work at menial tasks, such as chopping wood. The boy rebelled and demanded he be given a chance to learn his trade. Under threat of bodily harm, the employer yielded and there was no more hewing of wood and drawing of water for the apprentice lad.

The big, blond boy's name was Millard Fillmore and he became the thirteenth president of the United States.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the early settlers was James McNinch, who in 1807 built a log hut in Conesus township, first called Freeport and later Bowersville. One night he was called away from home. His sister came to spend the night with his wife in the lonely cabin, where a bed blanket hung in lieu of the door that McNinch had not had time to make.

Venison was cooking in the fireplace. A pack of hungry wolves in the woods scented the tempting meat and gathered. They grew bolder by degrees, finally threatening to enter the house. The two women managed to get a horse which had been hitched in the

clearing and fastened the animal to the door post. There he kicked lustily at the advancing wolves and kept them at bay, until they finally gave up the siege.

All along her shoreline, from the hills, dotted with farms, that roll so gently up from the water's edge at her northern extremity, to the steep and rugged uplands at her head, there have come down to us many another tale—of the old Mennonite church of the plain people who came from Pennsylvania to settle at Old Orchard Point and finally lost their identity in the changing scene—of the flat-boats that once brought the lumber down the lake from the Cedar Swamp and the teams that hauled it on the ice in the winters—of the dancing under the trees at Long Point and the oldtime fiddlers and the basket picnics of long ago.

In more recent days, Conesus kept up her martial traditions, with the establishment of the camp for reserve officers at Long Point where Wadsworth land reaches over the hills from Geneseo—of field maneuvers held around Conesus by Rochester national guardsmen as early as 1900.

Around Conesus will always linger happy memories of summer days beside the still waters—and the hoarse whistle of old steam-boats and the rumble of long, excursion trains.





# The Captive Lakes

**D**OWN from the hills comes the voice of Hemlock, like the skirl of bagpipes, wild and haunting and a bit mournful.

For Hemlock is a captive lake.

Long ago the arm of a great industrial city reached out to claim the six miles of narrow waters as its own. It chained the hill-girt lake to its chariot wheels with three long links of iron pipe hidden under Genesee Valley earth.

Through the years, Hemlock and her fellow captive, her lovely smaller sister, Canadice, have served their rich and powerful mistress well. Daily they mix a gigantic 34 million gallon cocktail for the big city to the southward. Yet the thirst of the city seems insatiable, as boundless as has been the pride of Rochester for nearly 70 years in her pure, upland water supply.

But, Hemlock is no mere, drab, faithful old retainer.

She is a wild and elfin child of the hills and the forest. None of the slim blue lakes of the Genesee Country has more physical allure. As you climb upward from the Springwater Valley along the wide, straight road that leads from the Southern Tier to Rochester, you catch your first glimpse of Hemlock's slender grace. Sometimes the trees on the steep banks momentarily hide her from view. She is the more beautiful for her elusiveness.

Hemlock is a mountain lake although the conservatism of her people would never let them call old Bald Hill or her other rugged guardians anything but plain "hills."

In the Indian tongue, Hemlock is Onehda and she is as rich in history and legend as she is in physical charm and utility.

In distant days before the Senecas became the masters of this domain, tribal fires, probably Algonkian, glowed on her wooded hills. The lake was a favorite fishing and hunting ground for the Senecas and the braves came to her Eagle Rock, to hear the echo of their own voices and in their simple faith to believe they were communing with departed warriors.

Sullivan's men forded Hemlock's shallow waters at her northern end before they marched over the Marrowback hills to bivouac at Conesus and later to close the Western Door of the Long House.

Then the pioneers came, Yankees skillful with ax and if needs be, with gun and fist. The whine of the saws echoed over the waters and bit by bit, the primeval hemlock forest came down and Slab City rose beside the outlet of the lake.

Hemlock had its day—and a pleasant one it was—as a summer resort. Once there were 100 cottages and five hotels along her shores and five steamboats on her waters. Those were the days of the Jacques House and the Half Way House and the good ships, Cora Belle and Mollie Tefft, and the picnics and the excursions of long ago.

That era ended when the city's need for Hemlock water became more insistent and Rochester came to own not only the lake, but much of the land along her shores.

\* \* \* \* \*

When in long gone autumns, the Senecas came to hunt and fish around the inlet of the lake, with them, year after year, glided a wilderness belle who was known as the Handsome Squaw and whose pulchritude became a legend in the pioneer days.



But in the fall of 1779, there were no warriors or savage beauties at Hemlock Lake. The Yankee army of General John Sullivan on Sept. 12 marched over the steep hills and dragged its artillery through the narrow defiles from Honeoye, over the old Indian trail, made nearly impassable by rains. They stopped at what later became known as Shorts' Flats to destroy fields of Indian corn, then forded the lake at its foot and ascended the rugged slopes between Hemlock and Conesus.

In 1790, the first white settler, Roswell Bliss, came. He built a cabin, a saw mill and a flat-bottomed scow. The latter he used to haul lumber down to the lake to his saw mill. Philip Short came next, in 1795. His descendants still live in the village.

Three villages sprang up—Gullburg, now the southern end of Hemlock village where in an early day paint was made from the blue clay in which the place abounded; Jacksonville, on the flats northeast of the present village of Hemlock, and Slab City or Hemlock on the outlet.

Gullberg was soon absorbed by Slab City but Jacksonville was once a thriving town, with distilleries, flour mills, a potash factory and even a public square. It has no real highway and was virtually inaccessible in winter. The settlers would barrel their flour and store it until spring, when they hauled it to Pittsford on the canal. Jacksonville vanished from the scene about 1846. The 70-year-old conduit of the Rochester water system, now undergoing repairs, runs through the heart of what once was Jacksonville. Historically minded Ernest Short, who lives in Hemlock village, showed me a wide-topped drinking glass that was a relic from the old distillery at Jacksonville. Seemingly it would hold a half pint. In pioneer days it held a drink of fiery native whisky that sold for three cents.

Hemlock grew and flourished. When the lumbering boom was at its height, so many settlers built their homes of wooden slabs around the outlet and the dam that the place became known as Slab City.



In 1800 a hermit named Meloy lived in a lonely log hut on the west shore of the lake. He hunted and fished all his waking hours and spoke to no one. One morning when rowing home after a fishing foray, he encountered a bear along the edge of the lake. The bear was hungry and went after the hermit. Bruin upset the boat and started to mount it. There ensued a strange sparring match. Meloy, wallowing in the water, would strike the bear with his oar and the animal would swing back with his paw. Finally the hermit drowned the bear and there was plenty of meat on the lonely table for many a moon.

I heard, too, at Hemlock tales of the old plank road that once ran to Rochester, of the winters when 200 teams hauled the lumber down the ice-locked lake to Slab City and of summers when the lake was full of timber-laden flat-boats.

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A modest little "History of Hemlock," written in 1883 by D. B. Waite, gives a picture of the lake in its heyday as a resort, although Rochester six years before had tapped it for a water supply.

The lake was lined with cottages and five boats rode the blue waters. The first steamboat was the Seth Green, launched in 1874 to the strains of the Lima Cornet Band. It was dismantled in 1879. Then came H. J. Wemett's Cora Belle; the Mollie Tefft, owned by a Rochester woman of that name; the Nellie, later rechristened the A. Bronson; the Camella, and the Wave.

There were five hotels: The Half Way House, so named because of its location; the Port House, at the head of Hemlock, a stopping place for all the boats; the Lake Shore Hotel and dance hall; the St. James, from which all lake tours started, and the three-story Jacques, at the northwestern edge, with its rambling piazzas.

Sheep Pen Point was where the farmers came to wash their flocks. And there was many another landmark mentioned in the little book.

When in the early 1890s, Rochester embarked on a vast water expansion program, began raising the level of the lake and building a new tunnel and conduit, besides acquiring more and more land around the lake, Hemlock as a summer resort was doomed. Some of the old-timers up there have never forgiven the city for that. But in the next breath they will tell about the high prices the city has paid for land.

Hemlock regards the city as an arrant spendthrift. They raise their eyebrows up in the hill country at the thought of a hydraulic expert, no matter how eminent in his profession, receiving a \$100 a day for his services—on the days he works.

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In 1872 the growing city of Rochester decided it could no longer rely on its old-fashioned springs and wells for its water supply. A private corporation had made a contract with the city, to supply it with Hemlock water, had even laid some wooden pipe and built, near East Henrietta, a reservoir whose outlines still remain. But this company lacked funds and could not fulfill its contract.

So the city decided to build its own system and turned to Hemlock because of the purity of the water, which could be sent coursing down the hills by gravity flow.

The first conduit, the one now under repair, was begun in 1873. The first water was turned into the pipes Jan. 22, 1876. In 1877, thirty miles of pole line was constructed between Rochester and Hemlock Lake—then the longest telephone line in the world. As Mr. Bell's invention was new and untried, the line was equipped with Morse instruments, as well as telephones.

The building of Conduit No. 2, in 1893-94, brought a considerable boom to the region. The city constructed two miles of brick-faced tunnel and old-timers recall the wagonloads of brick that rumbled down the roads and the excitement and rush of those construction days. Livonia and other neighboring towns shared in the

boom. About that time the city began buying up large acreages around the lake and the cottages and hotels and boats began to disappear. The third conduit was built in 1914-18.

Rochester owns 5,000 acres of land, 3,900 of which are forested, mainly with pine. Of the 69 square miles of water-shed, Canadice and its outlet account for more than 18; the rest belong to the Hemlock area.

The city is in the farming business with both feet, with 325 acres of hay, 75 acres of oats and 22 of wheat, mostly in the Springwater Valley at the head of the lake. These crops help feed the horses that draw the city's garbage wagons.

Rochester's forest preserve is second only to that of New York City. A constant reforestation program is under way. When the small pines were set out, they were thinned annually and the excess destroyed. Some one hit on the idea of selling them for Christmas trees. Rochester sold 7,500 of them in 1939, but for the past two years has not been in the Christmas tree business. For years a laboratory has been maintained at Springwater where an expert studies tree diseases and culture.

The city's average daily water consumption now is 34,000,000 gallons. During the depression it slumped to 26,000,000 gallons. It has reached the height of 45,000,000.

So you see Rochester has quite a stake in Hemlock-Canadice water.

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Hemlock Village, a bit of transplanted New England, sprawls for more than a mile along the main street. In the center of the town is the yellow-painted Metropolitan Hotel with its sturdy concrete pillars. The hotel is 93 years old, the exact age of its proprietor, William Haggerty. Haggerty at 93 is still a fine figure of a man, his skin as smooth, his bushy eyebrows as black, his wit as keen as in the days when he owned some of the best trotters in the countryside.



William Haggerty remembers when, a barefoot boy, he walked all the way from his home in Lima to see the wonders of the Hemlock World's Fair.

It has been called that for years. There are few villages the size of Slab City that have supported a fair for 74 years. The last two years the grounds have been deserted and sheep crop the grass where once crowds from Livonia and Honeoye and Lima and Canadice Corners and Allen's Hill and Taber's Corners and Springwater and the whole countryside gathered, come September. In its best year, 22,000 passed through the World's Fair turnstiles.

As Doris Smith, the postmistress, put it, "the fair was where you always saw everybody you ever knew."

Hemlock misses its fair and hopes it returns with the dawn of peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rivalling the World's Fair in interest some forty years ago were the baseball games between the lake cottagers and the natives. They were hotly contested struggles. Sometimes a tall, smiling chap from Geneseo that everybody called "Young Jim" played with the Valley nine. Since those days James W. Wadsworth has distinguished himself in fields other than baseball.

\* \* \* \* \*

On a hill, high above the west shore of Hemlock Lake, a square, four-story stone building stands out in bold relief against the woods. It is St. Michael's Mission House, where for ten years have dwelt and labored members of the order known as the Brothers of the Divine Word. The order was founded in Holland and has few branches in the east. At St. Michael's, high school pupils and graduates receive preparatory training for mission fields.

On the grounds of the mission house the good brothers have carved out of the rocky soil two grottos that house statues of the

saints. They are the result of many hours of devoted toil. The dim light in the caves, the sacred shrines—there is a medieval air about this mission overlooking Hemlock water.

The site was once the country home of the Most Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid, first bishop of Rochester. There he planted a vineyard on the slopes along the lake to provide the sacramental wine for the diocese. The Brothers of the Divine Word have expanded this vineyard until today they have a flourishing commercial wine business, besides supplying churchly needs.

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The pioneers were forthright men. Sometimes they took the law into their own hands.

There was the time in 1825 after the completion of the Erie Canal when dams were built at the Western New York lakes as feeders for the canal. It turned out the canal did not need them but the dammed up water was very convenient for the owners of saw mills at the outlet of Hemlock. In spring and fall, the water would back up into the swampy woods at the head of the lake. In the summer it dried up, leaving decaying substances that caused fevers among the citizenry.

The settlers at the head of the lake tired of this and urged that the dam be removed. The mill owners were deaf to these demands. One summer's day 200 farmers mobilized and came down to the foot of the lake, with axes, crow-bars and ropes. They proceeded to dismantle the dam and gates. The Slab City mill owners came to protest and remained to beg. The farmers yielded, the work of destruction halted and the "army" dispersed. But the next year they got permission from the state to remove the rest of the dam.

In 1866 a horde of squatters settled on the Springwater flats. The land-owners forced them to leave. A riotous time ensued, with barns burned and stock slaughtered. Finally the two forces met in pitched battle. The landowners won and the squatters' war went into history.

I am indebted to City Judge Arthur L. Wilder of Rochester, who lived as a boy at Webster's Crossing, for a couple of tall tales of the hills.

A man named Mike Weaver, who lived on the edge of a swamp near the Crossing, was the Baron Munchausen of the region. Here is one of his whoppers:

One day he went into the woods to trim the tops off fallen trees. He hitched his team to a load of the brush with a rope and started for his barn, never looking back. Imagine his surprise on arriving home to find the rope had stretched so that the tree tops were still in the woods while the team was in the barn. That night it rained and the rope contracted so that the brush came sailing down into his barnyard.

Another time Mike said he was driving a fast stepping team hitched to a wagon when a storm gathered. He whipped up his horses and outraced the oncoming storm. When he got home, he found the back of his wagon full of hailstones but not one had touched him or his fabulously swift horses.

In 1890 the Lehigh Valley built its branch to the foot of the lake and drove a silver spike to mark the terminal. One night, so the tale goes, an Irish engineer became sleepy—or something—and on arriving at the end of the line, thought he was at Livonia Center and drove the engine right into Hemlock Lake!

\* \* \* \* \*

*"A beautiful lake is the Canadice,  
And wild fowl dream on its broad expanse;  
Thy golden brooch of costly price  
Is dim with its radiant wave compared."*

So wrote the poet of the Genesee Valley, W. C. H. Hosmer, long ago.

Over in Ontario County, east of Hemlock, lies its radiant sister, Canadice, sparkling among wooded hills.



Canadice is only four miles long, but its Indian name, Shenadice, means "long lake." For half a century it has, like Hemlock, been the captive of the city. It has given generously of its cool, spring-fed water. For about half a mile, cottages line the shores, mostly on the west side. Once rattlers were plentiful in the hills. Once, too, Canadice had many more cottages and was a picnic spot for the countryside. In those days Pete Moose's place on the east shore was a favorite rendezvous. Now it is the residence of the city waterworks caretaker, and Canadice's day as a resort is done.

*"A beautiful lake is the Canadice,  
And tribesmen dwelt on its banks of yore  
But a hundred years have vanished thrice,  
Since hearthstones smoked upon its shore."*

An ancient legend clings to the little lake in the woods. In the Fifteenth Century, the Munsee tribe, a peaceful, little people, dwelt on a hill on Canadice's western side. A fierce and warlike tribe, the Mengwees, raided the Munsee settlement and killed every member of the tribe save Onnolee, the beautiful wife of a leading chief.

The fair prisoner was tied to the red belt of Mickinaw, the fierce chief of the invaders and was dragged away from her ravaged home. When the chief relaxed his vigilance for a moment, Onnolee, quick as light, seized the hunting knife from her captor's belt and plunged it into his side.

Then knowing her life was forfeit and while arrows whizzed past her head, she ran to the lakeside and chanting the death song of her people, "from the high rocks sprang."

They say that in the time of falling leaves, when the moonlight shines on Canadice water, a graceful, shadowy form is seen to rise from the bosom of the lake and a plaintive song is heard in a strange tongue.



# Magic in Those Hills

**I**T is a mystic countryside—this land of the Bristols and of the slim blue lake called Hon-eoye.

There are magic waters in her hills; there are ghosts of a lusty past in her valleys.

Where else would you find a spring that burns with a flame hot enough to broil a chop? Or a cave wherein a little tongue of fire that has never been quenched licks out in the darkness? Or waters with the power to magnetize knife blades?

Out of the past rise dense clouds of dust from the roads of the Bristol Valley as flocks of bleating sheep are led to the greatest slaughterhouse in the land. Out of a more recent past sound the merry voices of thousands, harvesting the hops that covered the hills and vales of Bristol.

America has few more picturesque landscapes. It has been likened to the wild hills of Kentucky and Tennessee. In autumn those hills are arrayed in a panoply of color that defies description. In winter they are a symphony of green and white.

Yet city folk were slow to "discover" this countryside.

Now hunting cabins and elaborate summer homes stand beside weather-beaten old farmhouses in the hills and the twelve miles of lakeshore are dotted with the cottages of a summer colony of 2,500 people.



At Honeoye village, at the foot of the lake that bears its name, summertime finds the wealthy and the sophisticated—and the ordinary—urbanites of many bloods rubbing elbows with the men and women whose Yankee ancestors settled there more than 150 years ago.

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Honeoye's history follows a familiar Lakes Country pattern.

First the site of the village on the flats housed an Indian town of 20 log houses, surrounded by 50 acres of field and orchard that the squaws tended while their lords and masters, if not on the war trails, were hunting and fishing in the hills and along the shining lake.

One September day in 1779 the Seneca old men, women and children left in the village were quietly braiding their corn and boiling their succotash when they heard the boom of distant cannon over the hills to the eastward. Sullivan's Yankee army was marching over the trail from Canandaigua. The Indians fled in wild alarm. When the Americans arrived, there was not a redskin in sight. Sullivan's men destroyed the village and the crops.

At Honeoye the Yankee general left a garrison of 50 men with a three-pound cannon. These men built a stockade called Fort Cummings after their leader and the rest of the army marched on to ravage the Seneca domain.

In the center of the village a monument commemorates the fort built there in 1779 with the inscription that "here were left the lame, the sick and the lazy" of Sullivan's expedition.

In 1787 a group of Massachusetts men bought 46,000 acres of land which now embraces most of the towns of Richmond and Bristol in Ontario County. Two years later, after an arduous three-month journey from the Bay State, the first settlers, led by Peter and Gideon Pitts, came to the flats at the foot of Honeoye Lake. They built a rude shelter out of the boards of their sled and in the spring plowed up the plain, which became known as Pitts' Flats. The Pitts

family became the leaders of the new community. Capt. Peter Pitts was called the patriarch of the backwoods, and the town for a time bore the name of Pittstown. The Indians called the lake Honeoye, which means "finger lying," probably so named because of its shape. Later the village took the name of the lake at its edge.

The Pitts house became the stopping place for notables—the Wadsworth brothers, Thomas Morris, and French nobility in the persons of the wandering Louis Philippe and the Duke de Liancourt.

The irreverent Louis, destined to become a king of France, wrote thus of a Sunday stay in the Pitts home:

"On our arrival, we found the house crowded with Presbyterians, its owner attending to a noisy, tedious harange delivered by a minister with such violence of elocution that he appeared all over in a perspiration. There were handsome women in attendance and we found them even more pleasant than fine rural scenery."

On Pitts Flats was the first drill ground in the Genesee Country and Capt. Bill Wadsworth came riding up from Geneseo on his black charger to lead the frontier militia there on training days.

Gideon Pitts succeeded his father as head man of the settlement and in 1821 erected the substantial white frame house that still stands on a hill in the village.

There are few communities in Western New York where so many generations have clung to the land on which their forefathers settled. There are still Blackmers and Allens and Reeds in Honeoye village and Garling houses on Allen's Hill, to name a few of the many pioneer families. Tradition runs deep along Honeoye water.

In 1823 Edwin Gilbert opened a store at Honeoye. Until this fall a Gilbert had kept store there ever since although the original building burned down.

The Gilbert store is now operated by Harold Fagan, erudite, widely traveled former Rochester teacher. Above his store is an old ballroom, relic of the days when the building was part of the pio-



neer Stout Tavern. In this old dance hall Harold Fagan's ancestors played for dances in Civil War days. He aims to remodel the old ballroom and hold dances there for summer folk and rural residents. He, too, is a believer in the Honeoye traditions.

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The marriage of a daughter of the house of Pitts to Frederick Douglass, the Negro statesman, caused a sensation in 1884. This Mount Holyoke educated descendant of the pioneers of Honeoye was 45 at the time. Douglass, a mulatto, born in slavery, and a widower, was in his sixties.

Helen Pitts was only a child when Douglass first visited Honeoye and met her father, Gideon, son of a founder of the settlement. Pitts was identified with the Underground Railroad and helped spirit many a fugitive slave to Canada and freedom. In the Pitts wood shed was an uncompleted excavation for a cistern which never held any water but which secreted many a fleeing black.

Helen Pitts went to Washington as a government employe. She became Douglass' secretary when the abolitionist was made recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia. Their marriage pleased neither blacks nor whites. But the couple was unruffled by the storm. Douglass said "My first wife was the color of my mother. My second wife is the color of my father." Helen Douglass remained loyal to her Negro husband, even after his death in 1895, and was instrumental in founding a Douglass Memorial Association. She died in Washington in 1903 and is buried in Mount Hope in Rochester.

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Honeoye lacks the long summer resort history of her sisters, Conesus and Hemlock. There were no big hotels on her shores or passenger boats on her waters. But about 1910 a steamboat, the W. W. Wilcox, was moved overland from Canandaigua by four-horse teams, and was used to tow logs from the head of the lake to the village. Development of Honeoye as a summer colony began



less than 25 years ago. The late George D. B. Bonbright and Herbert J. Winn of Rochester were among the pioneers. The resort tide came into full swing about 1936 and since then has continued steadily, until now it is estimated there are 500 cottages around the lake. Besides there are hundreds of cabins and summer homes, some of them really estates, in the Honeoye and Bristol hills. It has been fashionable of late years for Rochesterians to own "a farm in the Bristols."

Hunting, skiing, fishing, horse shows, grand scenery—all of these have combined to lure more and more city folk to the region.

A few years ago Rochester's long arm reached out toward Honeoye as a source of water supply. Ontario County fought this move in the courts vigorously. Rochester won the long litigation—and then abandoned the project.

On a windswept eminence north of Honeoye is an almost extinct community called Allen's Hill.

Once it was quite a thriving place, with stores, churches and several distilleries. The remaining buildings include a two-room white schoolhouse under the brow of the hill.

Part of it at least was there in 1843 when a 15-year-old girl came from her Massachusetts home to live with her uncle at Allen's Hill and teach in the little school. Her name was Mary Jane Hawes. For four years she taught the youngsters of the neighborhood. Then she met and married a frail, young lawyer named Daniel Holmes. They lived in Kentucky for a year. Then she came back to Allen's Hill again to teach for a short time. The couple moved to Canandaigua and eventually to Brockport, where Mary Jane Holmes, the most popular novelist of her day, wrote most of her 38 ultra-saccharine love stories during a busy half century.

Honeoye folk say that Mary Jane lived in a big red brick house that was built in 1812 and still stands on the road between Allen's Hill and Abbey's Corners.

Mrs. Holmes placed the scenes of most of her fiction in the South or her native New England. She seldom mentioned the Genesee Country that she knew so well. But in "Cousin Maude" or "The Milkman's Heiress," the heroine is a young girl who leaves her New England home, to be met at the end of her long journey at the Canandaigua depot by a farm carryall that takes her over rough roads to "Laurel Hill, from whose rocky hillsides she could see the sparkling waters of Honeoye."

No doubt the novelist was harking back to a day in her own girlhood when another New England lass named Mary Jane Hawes came to Allen's Hill to teach school within sight of "the sparkling waters of Honeoye."

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Honeoye people assert that the hills around their lake are not part of the Bristols. They are "the Honeoye Hills." The Bristol Hills overlook the Bristol Valley to the eastward.

The hills that gird the Bristol Valley certainly have enough beauty and lore and mysticism of their own without infringing on their neighbors.

In 1669, spurred by Indian tales of a magic spring, the Jesuit Father Galinee brought another Frenchman, the famous La Salle, to the Bristol Hills to see "the water that burned." They applied a torch and "the water immediately took fire and burned like brandy and was not extinguished until it rained." It was the first experience of a white man was a gas fissure.

The phenomenon that for centuries has been known as the Burning Spring, is in a ravine on the farm of Walter B. Case on the hill road off Bristol Valley. The place was once called Wilder Glen.

The flames leap out of the water when a match is applied. More than once a meat chop has been broiled by their heat. Of course, that was before point rationing.

In 1937 as part of the pageantry attending the anniversary of the Denonville expedition, the flame was lighted and the old visitation of La Salle was re-enacted at the Burning Spring.

On the same farm and along the same tiny stream is the Eternal Flame. In the dark niche of a cove beside a waterfall, sheltered from the winds and the storm, the little tongue of flame has glowed in the dimness for centuries—the one light that never fails.

In the Bristols, too, are the magic wells, that according to legend, will magnetize a knife blade. They go back to Civil War days when promoters went after oil in the hills. They drilled 1,000 feet and found only salt and that not in paying quantities. Three wells were dug. Two of them were capped. The third is used for farm purposes and this one is said to have the magic magnetizing properties.

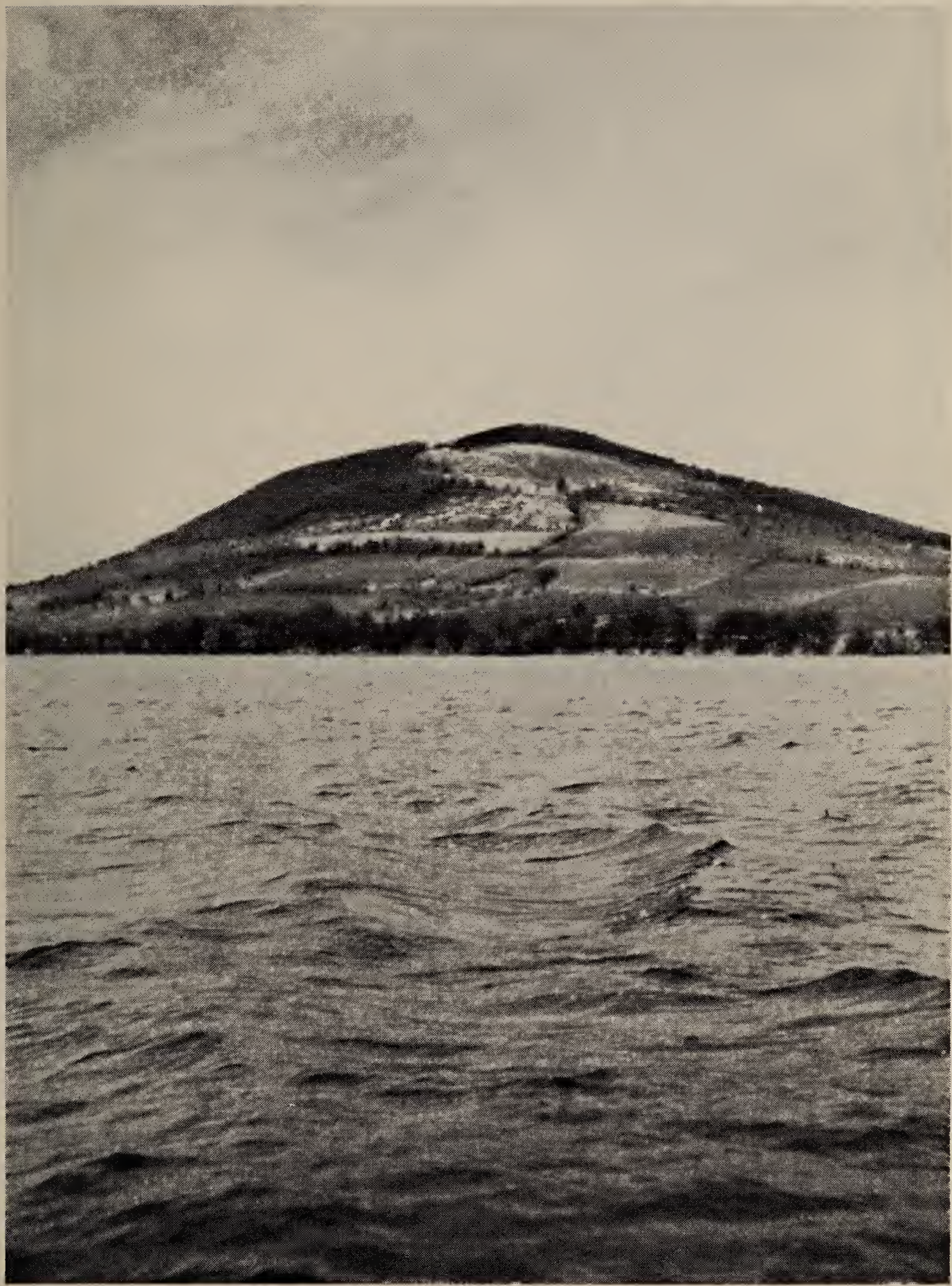
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Scattered along the road that threads the Bristol Valley is a procession of pleasant little villages. One of them is Vincent, named for a pioneer physician. Once it was known as Muttonville and for twenty years, between 1830 and 1850, it was the nation's greatest sheep abattoir. Once there were 50,000 sheep cropping the sparse verdure of the Bristol Hills. They combed it so thoroughly that in some sections the land has been sterile ever since.

Those were grim and gory and riotous days. The roads were choked with droves of whimpering sheep being led to the slaughter pens of Muttonville. The fence posts of Asa Gooding's farm and hundreds of others were covered with drying pelts. Vultures hovered over the scene in low circling formations.

A fast worker could kill 75 to 100 sheep in a day. It was said that these blood-smeared men, who loudly cursed the wailing sheep to drown their piteous bleatings, could throw, slit and skin a sheep before the heart stopped beating.





*Bare Hill, Senecas' Sacred Mount, Far Above Canandaigua's Waters*





The pelts were tanned and made into gloves, shoes and coats. Some of the meat found its way to far off markets. As many as 1,000 candles a day were made out of the mutton fat.

But a new order came to America and the star of Muttonville set. Kerosene and whale oil lamps supplanted tallow candles. The winning of the West made available thousands of acres of new pasturage, beside which the Bristol region was a veritable pin-point. Greater production of southern cotton cut the market for wool garments. Leather replaced sheepskins as wearing apparel. Now the glory of Muttonville is only as a tale that is told and Vincent is just another hamlet beside the road that winds through the Bristol Valley.

There are still sheep cropping those rocky hills, but they are a handful compared with the days when 40,000 were slaughtered at Muttonville in a single year.

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The Bristol Valley was the center of another industry not so long ago. For some 70 years the growing of hops was a flourishing business and the hop fields once covered 2,000 acres of Bristol land. Hops of Bristol and Bloomfield were considered among the best in the world markets.

Production began in 1835 when seedlings were imported from England. The fields brought fortune to many a grower; disaster to others who sought to "outguess the market."

For three weeks in late August or early September a mighty army of hop pickers, men, women and children from far and near invaded the valley.

Old newspaper accounts of 1903 relate that hop pickers were paid up to \$1.50 per day, the sum depending on the nimbleness of their fingers. An employment agency seeking pickers in Rochester announced that "women and girls could sleep in the farmhouses



and the men in the hop houses, on comfortable, straw-filled ticks. The fare was plain but there was plenty of it and at night there were dances where everybody had a good time."

For three weeks in the fall when the harvest was on, the gay strains of the fiddles sounded nightly. Old timers may remember a little apple-cheeked man named Ben Peer of Honeoye Falls as an impressario of many of these dances.

Men and women who picked hops in the Bristols long ago may remember seeking "the Kiss-Me-Quick," the flower that in the hop fields has the same sentimental meaning as the red ear at corn-husking time.

Of course, the harvest brought in a few rough characters, floaters from the cities. But in the main the pickers were substantial people of the community who made a few extra dollars in the fall in the hop yards.

Few hops have been grown in this area since 1921. New ingredients for beverages, combined with mould and pests, doomed the hop fields. No more do the growers plant the roots in the spring and set the 25-foot poles, some of which came from Canada, in the ground. Those same poles were pulled out by strong and expert workers in the fall. The smell of the sulphur fires in the basements of the drying houses no longer scents the air. For the hop fields have joined covered bridges and buffalo robes in limbo.

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Follow a rough, steep, winding mountain trail in the southern Bristols near Canandaigua waters; follow it for seeming miles, up and up, meanwhile thanking the mechanical genius of America's motor engine makers, and finally 2,256 feet above the level of the sea you reach the summit of Gannett Hill, reputedly the highest elevation in the Finger Lakes Country.

I discovered a rival around Canadice in Tabor Corners Hill, nine miles south of Honeoye. It is claimed this peak is four feet higher than Gannett Hill.

Be that as it may, when you reach the top of Gannett Hill, you feel as if you were atop the universe. To the west of the mountain peak is the "Jump Off," a sheer precipice that makes you dizzy to look at.

On that wild, remote hilltop the first snow of the season was falling—a few feathery flakes, although the calendar said mid-October and the hills were still brilliant in their autumnal robes.

In 1870 four Gannett brothers began to tame the tangled summit of the hill which came to bear their family name. One of them was Charles Gannett, a veteran of the Civil War. To him and his wife, Maria, a son was born on that hilltop home in 1876. His boyish feet were to know well the rough trail that led down the mountain side—before they went out into the world to fame and fortune. That boy's name was Frank Gannett.



## The Chosen Spot

THEY have buried the silvery sheen of Canandaigua's old Court House dome under a coat of sober gray.

That means more than just another paint job. It means that a symbol of a proud and historic city has departed, a casualty of the war.

Travelers nearing the city that is the western gateway to the Finger Lakes miss a familiar glint amid the distant trees. Gone is the benign aura cast upon the town on moonlight nights. It presented too shining a mark in a time of air raid alerts.

That glistening dome was Canandaigua's oriflamme, furled now for the duration.

It proclaimed that here was "The Chosen Spot." For that is what Canandaigua means in the Indian tongue. Around the lake that shares the city's name are the sacred shrines of the Senecas, the legendary birthplace of "The People of the Hill."

Canandaigua has been the chosen spot of the white man, too. It was always the seat of government, the place where the treaties were made, where affairs of state were settled, where the black robed judges sat.



It was the capital of a vast frontier realm when Rochester was a fever-plagued swamp, when Buffalo was an Indian village, when Syracuse was a salt marsh.

Here was established the first office for the sale of land to settlers in America, marking the beginning of settlement west of Seneca Lake. It was the shire town of "the Mother of Counties" when Ontario embraced all that is now Western New York.

Canandaigua's broad principal street, lined with majestic elms, noble public buildings and time-mellowed mansions, bears witness to the dreams of the founders, who planned a great city here.

On its stage was enacted much of the drama of the frontier. The actors were the great ones of their time. Cabinet members, generals, senators, jurists, landed gentry, land promoters, Seneca chieftains were in that cast. Two remarkable women, Jemima Wilkinson and Susan B. Anthony, faced Canandaigua's courts in bold defense of their beliefs. When William Morgan was abducted from her old jail, the powerful anti-Masonic party was born and the whole land thrown into ferment. Louis Philippe of France, Thomas Morris, Timothy Pickering, Phelps and Gorham, the Grangers, Charles Williamson, Stephen A. Douglas—what glittering names have been woven into her history.

Canandaigua is the Grand Dame of the Finger Lakes, just as is Bath of the Southern Tier. She is a stately and serene dowager and holds her head high. Yet she is friendly withal. Her position is so secure and so long established she needs curry favor with none. The charm of an old regime still invests this city by the long, blue lake.

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Walk the streets of Canandaigua and every corner yields its vision of the past.

At the foot of the lake where now is a field stood a neat Indian village called Kanandaque, with the most modern and best built

log houses in the Seneca domain—until Sullivan's army came in 1779 and left it in charred ruins.

Nine years later, a log store house rises in the woods. A New England syndicate, headed by Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham, has bought two million acres of wilderness and Canandaigua is the "chosen spot" for the headquarters of this enterprise. No one spends the winter of 1788 in that rude shelter, but the next year Joseph Smith moves in before the snow is off the ground. Settlement has begun. In a few months a party of ten, led by Gen. Israel Chapin, arrives after a long and hazardous journey over water routes from New England. With them is 37-year-old William Walker, agent for Phelps and Gorham. A log hut is built on the Public Square, near the present Main Street crossing. It is Walker's office, the first in the New World where land is sold directly to settlers.

In the village rise two frame houses, the first to be built west of Oneida County. Thomas Morris, son of Robert Morris, owner of vast frontier lands, lives in one; Oliver Phelps in the other.

Go to the Pioneer Cemetery, just west of Main Street, and on the box-like tomb that marks Oliver Phelps' last resting place, you read a summary of his career. But nothing is written there about the heart break the New Englander must have felt when his fortune melted away and his wilderness empire passed into other hands. He is in good company. Many another stout hearted pioneer sleeps in that old burying ground. The inscriptions on many of the headstones have been obliterated by time.

One of the old stones marks the grave of Caleb Walker. It was the first one dug in the wilderness. There was no priest available in 1790 so a physician, Dr. William Adams of Geneva, intoned the words of the Episcopal prayer service and led the procession to the grave. For 90 years thereafter, until the custom was abolished at the earnest behest of the medical society, the attending physician led all funeral processions in Canandaigua.



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The year is 1794. For weeks Indians have been pouring into Canandaigua, setting up their tents on the lake shore and in the woods around the village. Tall Timothy Pickering has come from Washington, the agent of the Great White Father, to sign a treaty with the Senecas and establish boundaries and claims for all time. Back of the festivities, the horse racing, the dancing and the oratory around the crackling fires, tension grips the hearts of the negotiators. In Ohio, "Mad Anthony" Wayne's American army is meeting the western Indians. On the outcome of that battle rides the fate of the frontier. If Wayne is beaten, the Senecas may go on the warpath, led by their British friends. The news is good. Wayne has won. The chastened Seneca chiefs hasten to sign the treaty.

The Indians revel in gifts of broadcloth and blankets, silver trinkets and beads. Someone slips them forbidden firewater. Then the nights are hideous with war whoops and brawling. Even after the treaty is signed, the Senecas linger, displaying their new finery.

Today a boulder near the Court House marks the signing of the Pickering treaty and the last general council with the tribes. And in the Wood Memorial Library and Museum is a faded old parchment, always kept under lock and key. It is the Indians' copy of the original Pickering treaty. Handed down from sachem to sachem, it finally came into a white collector's hands and then into the archives of Ontario County. It contains rounded phrases about "establishing firm and permanent friendships," and it bears the names of famous chiefs—Red Jacket, Cornplanter, Farmer's Brother, Handsome Lake, Little Beard, Fish Carrier—the mightiest names in the Seneca hierarchy. Each signed with a cross.

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Other pictures flash on the screen of the city's past. Stage coaches, gaily caparisoned and ponderous, each drawn by four horses, thunder up to the inns.



After the stage coaches, came the Rochester and Auburn Road in 1840 and Canandaigua becomes an important rail center. It still is. Rochesterians bound for Washington, still come down to Canandaigua on the Auburn Road to transfer to the red Pennsylvania coaches at the station that adjoins the distinctive old hotel fronting the square on the site of the pioneer Blossom Hotel.

From 1904 until 1930, the interurbans of the Rochester and Eastern rumbled through the streets, only to give way to the motor age. And now the sleek, fast buses follow the old trail across the state that the clumsy stage coaches knew of old.

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The stately old homes of Canandaigua—what glorious memories are theirs. There is Granger Place, square, yellow, three-storied, 129 years old, setting far back from the street and fronted by a wide, shady lawn. Two Cabinet members lived there, Gideon Granger, postmaster general under Jefferson, and his son, Francis. The son was an unsuccessful candidate for the vicepresidency and later was postmaster general under William Henry Harrison. He led a faction of the Whig Party that sought to de-emphasize the slavery issue. Because of the long gray locks of its leader, this bloc was called "The Silver Grays." Granger Place was a private school for young ladies from 1876 to 1906. Now it is a home for retired Congregationalist ministers and their wives.

There is the sturdy old Porter mansion at 210 North Main, built in 1800 by Gen. Peter B. Porter, the defender of Black Rock in the War of 1812 and one-time secretary of war. It housed another notable, John C. Spencer, secretary of war and of the treasury in the Tyler administration. Later on in this same house lived Elbridge G. Lapham, United States senator from New York.

The present occupant of that mansion, Miss Anna M. McKech-nie, sent me a batch of faded clippings that told a strange, sad story of a century ago.

In that house, in 1821, a son was born to John C. Spencer. He was christened Philip and in time he trudged with his schoolbooks across the street to the Academy. He was a tall, handsome daredevil with a sinister cast in one bold, dark eye.

When he was 21, Philip Spencer was apprenticed as a midshipman on the brig, Somers, of the United States Navy. It was the summer of 1842 and his father was then secretary of war in the Tyler cabinet. In the early winter, when the Somers was returning from an African cruise, a steward approached the captain, Alexander Slidell Mackenzie and poured into his ear the story of a plot aboard ship to mutiny, murder the officers, seize the brig and hoist the black flag of piracy to her masthead. The leader of this plot, the steward said, was the son of the secretary of war.

The captain immediately put young Spencer and two accused co-conspirators in irons. A council of ship's officers doomed the trio to death. One gray December afternoon the crew of the Somers averted their faces from the yardarm. For there dangled the bodies of three of their mates and one of them was Philip Spencer of Canandaigua.

The execution caused a national sensation. John Spencer was a power in politics. So was his father, Ambrose, the old judge and former mayor of Albany. Friends of the Spencers rallied around them. They claimed the sentence was hasty, unmerited and the crime unproven. They called the execution "sheer murder." When the Somers docked at New York, her captain faced a federal inquiry and a Naval court martial. He was exonerated but a bitter debate raged for years over the affair.

Hidden away behind a store in Coy Street are the remains of probably the oldest house in the city, that of General Chapin, the pioneer and peace-maker with the Indians. Its walls could tell of Senecas and settlers around the peace table, of all the hopes and fears of the pioneer time.

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Throughout the state, the prowess of Canandaigua Academy in the field of athletics and scholarship has often been manifested. It has kept its old-fashioned name for a century and a half. For the first academy was built in 1795. In 1830 a youth of 17 with a massive head, short legs and a flair for debate and political intrigue, came to town from Vermont after his mother had married into the Granger clan. His name was Stephen Arnold Douglas. For three years Douglas sat in the old academy class rooms. Then he went west to become the Little Giant of politics, the rival of Lincoln and a contender for the presidency of the United States.

The old academy gave way in 1905 to the present building.

The First Congregational Church with its curious "built in" porch under a half moon arch, is 131 years old. Its bell always leads the chorus of church chimes on Sunday mornings, in deference to its seniority, another Canandaigua tradition that makes the city so distinctive.

The year is 1826. The Grand Canal has been built, far from Canandaigua, and Rochester and Buffalo are booming towns. But the Finger Lakes city is still a place of consequence and a seat of government. In its old jail with its high, stone wall, William Morgan, a printer with a defiant, dissolute face, is lodged on a trumped up debt charge. Back of his arrest is a determined effort to silence his threatened expose of the secrets of Free Masonry. Men, no friends of Morgan, on a moonlight September night, come to the jail, pay the \$2 debt and he is given into their keeping. Frenzied cries are heard on the jail steps as Morgan is seized, bound, gagged and thrown into a waiting carriage with the curtains drawn. Then begins a long, strange journey across the state to Fort Niagara. Morgan is never seen alive again. The country is ablaze with intense excitement and the anti-Masonic party comes into being.

That old jail goes down in 1895 and the present one is built. On a Sunday afternoon in May, 1924, there is another jail delivery. Howard Keavin, bandit-slayer of a Geneva policeman, is awaiting



trial. He has two visitors, his red haired wife and his sister. The lone guard leads the prisoner from his cell into the visitors' room—and looks into two revolvers, one in Keavin's hand, the other in his wife's. The Keavins back out the door, and into a waiting automobile, its engine running. The sister remains behind and asserts her innocence of any part in the affair. The guard pursues and two bullets whine past his head. The speeding car is lost in the heavy Sunday traffic. Keavin is recaptured months later and brought to justice.

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Canandaigua, ever a hot bed of abolitionism, is a station on the Underground Railway before the Civil War. There is a famous trial, in the old Court House, of men who rescued a runaway slave from government officers. Two noted Abolitionists, Gerrit Smith and John P. Hale, come to town and pour their impassioned eloquence upon a street crowd. There are jurors in the crowd. A verdict of acquittal follows—amid cheers.

Fort Sumter is fired upon and the war clouds break. There are patriotic rallies and the needles of Canandaigua women fly. They sew a silken flag seven feet by four feet for the volunteers. Troops, en route to the South, bivouac on the old fair grounds. As in the War of 1812 when Canandaigua housed an arsenal, the town takes on a martial atmosphere.

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June, 1872, and a square-jawed, indomitable spinster faces a federal judge in the court room from whose walls look down the pictured pioneers. The prisoner at the bar is Susan B. Anthony and she is accused of casting her vote in defiance of the law. She had led 14 women through a crowd of gaping men in a Rochester barber shop to demand and to be granted the right to ballot. Judge Hunt, his mind made up, directs a verdict of guilty. He is deaf to de-

fense counsel's plea that the case be given the jury. The suffragist is fined \$100—which she never pays. Her demand that she be sent to a cell is unheeded.

That night there is a high wind and the wooden statue of justice in the Court House dome crashes to the ground.

In that same court house 65 years later the first woman jury in Western New York's history was sworn into service.

Canandaigua has had three court houses. The first one built in 1794 and adorned with a codfish weather vane, was abandoned in 1824, but was not razed until 1899. There Jemima Wilkinson, the Universal Friend, came up from Crooked Lake to face a charge of blasphemy and was acquitted.

The second Court House, which served from 1824 to 1857 when the present building with the once shining dome, was erected, is now the City Hall. Of late years the Federal Court has convened in the Postoffice Building.

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Other landmarks of Canandaigua history—the Messenger, founded in 1797, the oldest newspaper west of the Hudson—the first Masonic lodge chartered in 1792—the first fair and plowing match in 1819, the beginnings of a country fair that went on for 122 years until war forced its suspension two years ago.

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Canandaigua always was the mecca for the lawyers and the politicians. One of the most famous in later years was John Raines, a congressman and a state senator and in his day, the Republican boss of the county. He was the author of the Raines Liquor Tax Laws, which increased the tax on all hotels serving liquor. The act also provided that only bona fide hotels could serve liquor on Sundays. Such hotels came to be defined as any that sold food and lodging. As a result, "Raines Law Hotels" mushroomed all over

the state, places where there were beds in which none slept and sandwiches that none ate. Sometimes a lone and mouldy sandwich sufficed. These abuses were not the fault of the author of the law, which was later repealed.

At that time the Democratic boss was John Flanagan but his chief claim to fame rests not in politics, but in the restaurant he operated that was celebrated throughout the state for its fine sea food, especially its 25-cent oyster stews. He began his career selling sandwiches at the railroad station. Famous, too, at the dawn of the century was Canandaigua ale, now only a memory, made in the old McKechnie Brewery.

In 1890, a tall, smiling youth, with mechanical skill in his hands and bold, business acumen in his brain, opened a bicycle shop in Main Street where a market now stands. His name was John North Willys. This Canandaigua boy went on to power and riches in the infant automobile business and rounded out his career as minister to Poland.

Canandaigua had her Lady Bountiful. Her name was Mrs. Frederick Ferris Thompson and she was the daughter of Myron H. Clark, the first Western New Yorker and the only Prohibitionist to go to the governor's chair. She was immensely wealthy and gave liberally to her home city—a site for a post office, a hospital and laboratory and a civic playground.

The Thompson estate, Sonnenberg, on the outskirts of the city, for years was a show place. There was a pretentious mansion on the 612 acres and velvet lawns, 33 acres of forest, sunken gardens, rose gardens, Japanese gardens, huge greenhouses, an aviary of 500 birds, a 400-gallon swimming pool and a view of Canandaigua's blue waters.

Today that estate is the site of the U. S. Veterans' Facility, a hospital for neuro-psychiatric cases arising out of war. It was opened in 1933 and the original cost was \$1,700,000, after its sale to the government by Mrs. Thompson's heirs. The former mansion is



now a nurses' home. There are still gardens at Sonnenberg but they are mostly vegetable gardens where pitiful nerve-shattered veterans of the war of 1918—and this war—may work with their hands among green and growing things.

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In far off Weewak in New Guinea, American planes swoop low over a Jap airfield. From the planes parachutes float down. They do not contain fighting men. They contain clusters of 23-pound fragmentation bombs. The parachute and bomb had been sealed in a container fastened to the plane. When the unit is released, the can falls away and the bombs float down in the parachutes, which slow their descent so that the bombs do not explode until the attacking plane is far enough away to escape harm in the explosion.

These parachuting bombs have been effective. In the Weewak raid, some 225 Jap planes were caught on the ground. Of them 120 were destroyed and others severely damaged.

The parachutes are made of stout rayon. What is more to the point they are made in Canandaigua—in a converted corset factory.

For 22 years the Miller Company made corsets in Canandaigua. Now it does 100 per cent war work, under the aegis of the Rochester Ordnance District. It employs 225 people, most of them women. The majority have husbands, sons or other relatives in the service. Among the workers are many who have never been in industry before. Some of them are working purely as a patriotic service. Bombs carried downward by the Canandaigua-made parachutes, raining destruction on enemy position, surely are suitable reward.

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A city since 1913, Canandaigua is the third smallest in the state with a population of 8,321 in the 1940 federal census. Only Sherill and Mechanicville are smaller.

There were those among her citizenry who opposed Canandaigua's attaining the status of a city. Those same influences have

tended to keep it a fine residential city, without too much smoke of industry staining the historic buildings.

Canandaigua exudes an air of stability. You sense there is wealth in the stately old town—but much of it is dormant wealth.

There is a warm friendliness about Canandaigua and no little civic pride. And there are always the old traditions.

You can't blame the Grand Dame of the Finger Lakes for glorying in her past. For that past has been glorious.

And I hope, when the war is over, that the Court House dome will glitter again in the moonlight—symbol of "The Chosen Spot."

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Two steamboats lay side by side along the pier, like two sprinters awaiting the starting gun.

A minute or two and they would be puffing up the 16 miles of sunlit lake. Already they were belching out clouds of smoke that all but obscured little Squaw Island and her old trees swaying in a gentle breeze.

On one of the boats was painted the name The Ontario. She burned wood and sparks shot out of her stack, scorching holes in passengers' clothing.

The other was the Canandaigua, a soft coal burner that left smudges on passengers' cheeks.

They were rivals and the two captains glared at each other as each prepared to sound the final warning whistle.

Just then a young woman hurried down to the pier, glancing uncertainly at the rival steamboats. Under one arm she carried a baby. Her other arm clutched a satchel.

As one man, the two captains sprang toward her. One seized the satchel. The other grabbed the baby.

Needless to say, the astute mariner who chose the baby won the fare.

That was in "the good old days," when James A. Garfield was president and the Widow of Windsor was queen and all the world was at peace—and a steamboat ride around Canandaigua Lake cost but 25 cents.

It has been many a year since steamboat whistles have echoed over Canandaigua's waters. The Ontario and the Canandaigua now are only memories, along with the Ogarita and the Oriana and the Onnalinda and Wally Reed's canopy-topped Eastern Star.

Gone, too, are the 60 docks that once dotted the 32 miles of lake line, the docks where the steamboats picked up grapes from Vine Valley and apples from Woodville and other produce, until the holds bulged—while above the decks, bands played and passengers danced and sang in those excursion days of long ago.

For more than a century the boats churned the waters of the most westerly of the Finger Lakes. That pleasant era is gone as irrevocably as are the council fires that once burned on the Sacred Hill above the "Chosen Lake" of the Senecas.

Indian hearts were bitter when they relinquished this favorite rendezvous of their ancestors before the throb of Sullivan's war drums and the bugles of his Yankee Army that was making a flaming hell of their Long House.

Canandaigua won the hearts of the white men, too, and bound them to her with a loyalty so strong that the lake came to be called by her admirers, "The Gem of the Inland Waterways."

And thousands of summer residents right now are looking forward to sunny days when—OPA willing—they can again partake of Canandaigua's peace and beauty and swim and fish and sail on her gracious waters.

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Canandaigua ordinarily is a tranquil lake and on clear days mirrors the azure sky and the wooded hills that barricade it at either side, rich with vineyards on the gentler slopes and rising to wild heights at its head.



But the lake has its moods and some of them are angry ones when the water turns a steely gray and caps of white ride the tossing waves.

On such mornings, when the wind charges down from South Hill like a galloping buffalo and whips the lake into foaming fury, those who believe in legends say: "It is the 10 o'clock wash. The Great Serpent is turning over in the bottom of the lake."

They mean the reptilian monster that centuries ago all but exterminated the People of the Great Hill.

The legend of the Serpent of Bare Hill has many versions. I am repeating one of them.

Long ago the Creator caused the earth to open and out of the side of a massive hill the ancestors of the Seneca Nation came into the world. For a time they lived in peace there. A boy of the tribe found a little snake in the woods. It was an unusual serpent for it had two heads. The boy took it home, made a pet of it and fed it the choicest deer meat. The thing grew to incredible size and its hunger knew no bounds. Its master could not obtain enough game for its voracious appetite. The people of the tribe came to fear it as a monster.

Finally the great serpent encircled the hill and barred the gate with its opened, double jaws so that none could escape. Driven by hunger, the people tried to get away and one by one, they were eaten by the monster. At last only a young warrior and his sister remained of all the People of the Hill.

One night the young brave had a vision. If he would fletch his arrows with his sister's hair, they would possess a fatal charm over the enemy. He followed his dream and shot his magic arrows straight into the serpent's heart. The reptile was mortally hurt and in agony writhed his way down Bare Hill, tearing out trees and flailing the earth until he finally slid into the lake.

As the snake rolled down the hillside, he disgorged the skulls of the Senecas he had devoured. In the area have been found large

rounded stones divided into geometric patterns and weirdly like human heads. The superstitious Iroquois knew nothing of the science of geology which explains the pattern of the stones as formed by the slow deposit of lime in the post glacial age.

But to this day nothing has ever grown in the path of the serpent down old Bare Hill. Its somber peak stands out above the rich and fruitful Vine Valley. Farmers have sought in vain to flout the old legend by fertilizing the soil. The hill is just as barren and desolate as it was when the Indians buried their dead there and made their arrows from a blackened oak on its peak.

Again the scientists have an explanation for the hill's sterility. It is covered with shale so thick that rain water cannot soak in to refresh the soil.

Dr. Arthur C. Parker, director of the Rochester Museum and former state archeologist, is a recognized authority on Indian lore. In his veins flows the blood of the Keepers of the Western Door. He "hates to spoil a picturesque legend" but he insists that careful research and excavation show that South Hill in the "Whaleback" country, and not Bare Hill, is the real Genundewah, the sacred hill of the Senecas. Bare Hill, he believes, was inhabited by an earlier, mound culture people. The forested slopes and deep gulleys around South Hill in the West River region show traces of a large early Seneca settlement. And Dr. Parker points out that Sunnyside presents the same phenomenon of barrenness as does Bare Hill.

Science sometimes can raise hob with legends.

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Around tiny Squaw Island at the foot of the lake hangs another old Indian tale. In 1779 when the smoke of their burning villages and fields filled the air and Sullivan's guns boomed out the death knell of the Nation, the Seneca women and children sought refuge on the tree-clad isle. Squaw Island, the smallest of New York State's parks, grows smaller each year as the lake gnaws into its shores.



Sullivan's troopers reported finding wild grapes in profusion in the present Vine Valley, precursors of the later large vineyards. No doubt those soldiers on the old trail caught their breath, just as do motorists today, when at a turn in the road, the blue splendor of the lake suddenly unfolded and it seemed as if the highway were about to leap in the lake.

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In 1823 a pretty maid in demure bonnet and gay hair ribbon smashed a bottle of wine over the side of the first boat to sail Canandaigua Lake. The girl was Sally Morris, daughter of Thomas Morris, land owner and one of the elite of Canandaigua. The boat was the Lady of the Lake and her launching marked the start of 109 years of navigation on the lake.

Many boats followed in her train: Two Ontarios, one of which burned, the Henry D. Gibson, launched in 1865; the Joe Wood, first of the side wheelers; the Canandaigua, the Genundewah; the Ogarita which made her maiden voyage in 1889 and which had the shrillest whistle on the lake and because of her Irish crew, was dubbed "The O'Garrity"; the Oriana, also built in 1889; the Seneca Chief, a small, fast craft; the big excursion boat, the Onnalinda, and the Eastern Star, launched in 1914.

When Captain Wallace Reed on a fall day in 1932 moored his canopy-topped Eastern Star, he wrote the last chapter in the long history of lake navigation that had begun with the Lady of the Lake.

Everybody in Canandaigua told me that "if I wanted to know about lake boats, to see Wally Reed."

Wally Reed, with his pipe and his sailor's cap and his weather beaten cheeks, is as much a part of the Canandaigua lakefront as Squaw Island or the old Swimming Academy. He has spent half a century around the lake. For many years he was a game protector. Then he turned to the steamboats and operated his own Eastern Star for 18 years. He still runs a boat repair shop at the foot of the lake.



He went back in retrospect to the gala days of Canandaigua Lake—when the Onnalinda was jammed with 600 passengers, with another 400 on a boat in tow, and merry music floated out over the calm waters—when the steamboats made daily runs and picked up produce at all the 60 docks and points.

Sadly he recalled how the coming of the automobile and the paved roads ended the steamboat era—and he tied up his Eastern Star forever.

Wally Reed's life will always revolve about the waterfront he knows so well. Come hail or high water or ice or blazing sun, he'll be there, tinkering with motors and masts and rigging, at the little shop on the lake's northern tip.

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Time has failed to dull the merry sparkle in John Gartland's eyes, eyes that have watched the changing scene in Canandaigua and its lake for all of his 84 useful years. Now a retired business man, he is as chipper and active as a man in his fifties. He once owned the lakeside land now occupied by the Country Club.

He remembered how when he was a boy the lake boats provided virtually the only passenger and freight transportation around the lake, for the roads were narrow and rough. His wife, too, knew the old boats well for she was born and raised in Vine Valley. More than 30 years ago John Gartland and his family went all the way to Vine Valley and back during the Christmas season in a horse-drawn cutter—on the ice of the lake. Sometimes the ice crackled ominously.

He called to mind the days of the winter ice harvests and the big ice house at the foot of the lake. He told how a steamboat would come down the lake laden with 65 to 50 tons of grapes, to be shifted to the Pennsylvania freight cars that then ran down to the water's edge. He recalled the days when commercial fishing was a considerable business and Canandaigua white fish was as famous as Flanagan's Restaurant.

John Gartland summoned out of his memory treasure chest the old excursion days when the steamboats were packed with merry-makers. He remembered particularly the Zouves from Rochester in their brilliant uniforms and the spine tingling music of their band as they boarded the Onnalinda on a long gone summer Sunday.

Gartland chuckled as he spoke of the bitter competition between the lake boats. When there was more than one on the lake, the rivalry beat the fare down to 25 cents round trip. When one had a monopoly, the charge rose to 50 and sometimes 60 cents.

He rattled off the names of the old stopping places of the boats around the lake: Glen Cove, Woodville, Oak Cliff, Monteith's, Forester's Point, Bay View, Windsor Beach, The Hermitage, Gage's and of course, Vine Valley and Seneca Point.

Seneca Point, 10 miles up the west shore from the city, now is a swank Rochester summer colony. In the 1890s it was a popular amusement resort. Maj. F. O. Chamberlin operated the four story, many turreted Seneca Point Hotel with its broad porches and dancing pavilion.

In Indian days there was a fine orchard there, the only one in the region that Sullivan's invaders spared. That probably was an oversight. The American general had no reputation for sentimentality.

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Three miles from the head of the lake, hemmed in by hills so mighty they seem almost to shut off the sunlight, lies Naples, in a countryside that a great phrase maker, William Jennings Bryan, once called "A spread of poetry written by the Great Author of the universe."

In the 1850s Edward McKay planted 150 grape vines of the Isabella variety on a hillside near Naples. It was the beginning of a vast industry. Germans, who knew the science of grape growing and wine making in the Old Country, were attracted to this fertile

land. One of them was Jacob Widmer. His descendants today operate in Naples one of the largest wineries in the East. Great vineyards climb over the steep hillsides all about.

During this fall's grape harvest, Italian prisoners of war were sent into the area to help save the crop. They must have felt at home in this sunny countryside, with its vineyards and names like Naples and Italy Hill, towering in the distance. At any rate, it is said, when they heard of the surrender to the Allies of an Old World Naples, that their songs rang out the more merrily and their white-toothed smiles were wider than ever.

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On the east shore of Canandaigua Lake is a different sort of summer colony. Its name is the Le Tourneau Christian Camp. Cottages are clustered around a spacious tabernacle and a new memorial hall.

Its founder, Robert G. Le Tourneau, president of the Christian Business Men's International Committee, is an unusual man. He spends half his time manufacturing road-making machinery in big factories in Peoria, Ill.; in Georgia, and California. The other half he devotes to promoting what he calls "practical Christianity." Its keystones are observance of the Golden Rule and the abolition of greed and selfishness as solution of the world's ills. He pours out his profits liberally in spreading his doctrine, which is built around Fundamentalist theology.

Three years ago, Le Tourneau built his tabernacle on the hill overlooking the lake under the banner of the Interstate Evangelistic Association. It was primarily to be a revival center for young people. But men forgot the Golden Rule and war came to the world, so for the past two summers, the camp, while continuing its evangelistic aims, also has housed some 200 child refugees of occupied lands in Europe and the underprivileged of New York slums.

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The war has cast a dour shadow over the lake in the summer-time. It choked the gayety of Roseland Park, the region's Coney Island, at the northern end. There OPA had a field day collecting license numbers during the pleasure driving ban.

Canandaigua's summer residents come from Rochester, Buffalo, from the whole Finger Lakes Country and from far places, too. They sent their sons off to war with a smile although their eyes were dimmed with tears, they gave their blood, they bought war bonds, but when it came to giving up summer week-ends beside their beloved lake—it seemed too much of a sacrifice.

Canandaigua is a queenly lake and she rules her loyal subjects under a yoke of gentleness and charm.

Of all their Long House empire, no spot was more revered by the Senecas than the hills above Canandaigua waters where first their tribe came into being, where for years burned their sacred fires and their medicine men brewed their magic. The long and lovely lake where they fished and hunted in their day of glory had a special place in their hearts and in the wampun records of their confederacy.

When present day worshippers of the "Chosen Lake" proudly say "It is the Gem of the Inland Waterways"—you just can't dismiss that boast as mere local pride.

For they have something there.



# Tumbling Waters

**Y**EAR after year, the waters ate away at the rocks until finally a great door was cut out of the mountainside.

Enter that door today and you behold the Pageant of the Waters. All about you lie the jagged pages of the Romance of the Rocks.

Waters, icy cold, pour down from the mountain top, splash over rocky precipices into foaming cauldrons, amid glens and grottos, between towering walls of stone, to join the spring-fed lake called Seneca.

Verily, Seneca's old head wears a crown of glory.

It is pillowed in a scenic wonderland that has been called "The Switzerland of America" and is famous on two continents.

There, as in Tennyson's "Bugle Song":

*"The long light shakes across the lakes  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory."*

But do I need to tell Western New Yorkers about the epic grandeur of Watkins Glen?

I hope not. For years, thousands have come from far places to beat a path to the door in the mountainside, to that magnificent outdoor theater that was not built by human hand.





*Watkins Glen, Nature's Wonderland*





Call the roll of the Glen's beauty spots and their very names tell the story of Nature's great masterpiece better than ever could my poor fingers fumbling over the typewriter keys:

FROWNING CLIFF, SENTRY BRIDGE, SHADOW GORGE  
PILLARS OF BEAUTY, ARTISTS' DREAM, RAINBOW FALLS  
BAPTISMAL FONT, PULPIT ROCK, GLEN CATHEDRAL  
ELFIN GORGE, LOVER'S RAMBLE, FAIRY POOL.

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But Watkins Glen is not only the more than 500 acres of wonderland of nine waterfalls and many cascades and glens and caverns and gorges, of the miles of twisting man-made rustic stairways and bridges, that make up the state park that bears the familiar name.

It also is a picturesque and historic village, lapped by the southernmost waters of Seneca Lake, the trading center for a rich farming region, the site of an important salt industry—but primarily a resort town, probably the best known of its size (Pop. 2,906) in all the East.

Long before the first Iroquois moccasin print was stamped on Seneca's sands, the Algonkians manned an aboriginal fortress in the mountain cleft.

The entrance to the Glen was a mystic spot to the poetic and imaginative Senecas who built lodges and held councils in the glade.

In 1779 the old trail around the lake felt the tramp of marching feet as Sullivan's army, flushed with victory over the Seneca-Tory allies at Newtown (Elmira), pressed on to wipe out the Long House of Hiawatha's League.

Nine years later smoke curled up from the first settlers' cabins built in the almost trackless wilderness.

In 1794 a syndicate, headed by John W. Watkins and Royal Flint, bought 325,000 acres of land at the head of Seneca Lake.

After that the settlers' wagons came rumbling in and a cluster of houses arose by the lake in the shadow of the wild hills.

The real father of Watkins Glen was Dr. Samuel Watkins, brother of the first landed proprietor. Struck by the beauty of the place, he called the settlement Salubria. Believing in its commercial future because of its position on the waterways of the new country, he laid out broad parallel streets after a metropolitan plan.

When in 1827 the Chemung Canal connected Seneca Lake with the Chemung River and provided a route for trade with the Southern ports, Sam Watkins' dream of a metropolis seemed about to be fulfilled.

Watkins built the Jefferson Hotel in 1834. It still stands in the heart of the village. The community was incorporated as Jefferson in 1842. But the era of the canal boom was shortlived and the lakeside village, renamed Watkins in 1852, adding "Glen" in 1926, slumbered—until it capitalized on its scenic assets.

Watkins Glen is the seat of Schuyler, one of the youngest and smallest of upstate counties, but with more waterfalls and glens and gorges—and possibly more beauty—to the square inch than any other.

It was not always the shire town. When Schuyler was created in 1854, Havana (now Montour Falls) was chosen as the county seat. For 14 years there ensued one of those county seat wars so common in the early days. The board of supervisors refused to take possession of the new county buildings at Havana and held court, instead, in rented quarters at Watkins. The rival villages carried their feud into the courts. In 1868 Watkins triumphed and the seat of government was moved three miles to the northward.

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It was a newspaper man, J. Morvaldon Ells, who first saw the commercial resort potentialities of the Glen. In 1863 he raised some capital and built some rude paths and benches, opening the spot to the tourist trade.



Other private companies succeeded him. Between 1871 and 1873 the Glen was operated by Burton Parsons of Troy, Pa., who gained wide publicity for the young resort by sending railroad tickets to every editor and his wife in the East. The scribes came, saw, and went back home—to write about the wonders of Watkins Glen. Health resorts and hotels sprang up and lake boats and trains brought hundreds of beauty and health seekers.

The old Glen Mountain House, destroyed by fire in 1903, for years was a favored rendezvous on the south side of the Glen. Later came the huge Glen Springs Hotel and Health Resort to make Watkins a spa that in its heyday rivaled Saratoga.

In 1906 the park was acquired by the American Scenic and Historical Preservation Society. In 1911 the Glen came under control of the State Park Commission. Since then it has been greatly beautified and many stairways and bridges built, some of them 160 feet above the swirling waters.

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The Glen has seen many throngs in its long history, but nothing like the 350,000 people that invaded the park the Labor Day weekend of 1934.

They came to see a strange and heart gripping spectacle, a deer, stranded on a narrow ledge in the side of a sheer cliff. An enterprising local newswriter, Arthur Richards, sent out the story and wire services fed it to papers all over the country.

For three days all sort of stratagems were used to lure the captive to safety but in vain. An Indian used his woodland lore. A special bridge was built and hoisting apparatus brought to the park. Finally on Sept. 8, three men worked the deer down the cliff and into a stream, whence the graceful, frightened creature, unharmed, bounded down 123 stone steps to freedom.

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Down through the beautiful glen that had brought fame and fortune to the village, death and destruction roared on the crest of

the flood waters of Glen Creek on a July night in 1935. A record cloudburst had swollen all the little mountain streams to bursting and the angry waters, assembling in the hills, joined forces to charge through the glen and attack the low lying village.

Streets became torrents, water, ankle deep, despoiled living rooms, a school-teacher lost her life when her home was swept away, fine old trees were uprooted and the contours of the park itself were altered by the maddened waters.

Watkins Glen counted the toll—175 families homeless, damage in the region of nearly three million dollars. State troopers stood guard, tourists were marooned and isolated from home and kin until wire communications could be restored. The village water supply was contaminated and drinking water was trucked in from Horseheads and Geneva.

It was many a week before normalcy again reigned in Watkins Glen and it will be many a year before the flood of 1935 will be forgotten by those who lived through its horrors.

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Perched on its hilltop 300 feet above the village and commanding a superb 20-mile view of lake and hill, the Glen Springs Hotel escaped the flood. But there were other enemies it could not evade. Changing times and war restrictions have conquered Watkins Glen's most famous resort. "The American Nauheim."

A few months ago the great three-story hotel with its rambling wings and cottages after the Saratoga pattern, closed its doors. The rich furnishings, the shining silver, the snowy linen were sold and scattered over the countryside. Some of it found its way into humble dining cars and rooming houses. Many of the furnishings went to the Clifton Springs Sanitarium and Keuka College.

I climbed the long, steep hill that leads to Glen Springs and found only a desolate emptiness there. I tried to recreate the scenes of its glory when stylish carriages, and later on, rakish automobiles, rolled up the winding, tree-lined driveways, when lights blazed from

the big banquet hall, when a herd of pure bred Guernsey cattle ranged the 100-acre farm and the links swarmed with golfers, among them the elite of the nation.

Again famous guests rocked on the wide porches, wizened old John D. Rockefeller, the Oil King; curt, straight-backed John J. Pershing; unctuous, mustached Charles Curtis, stage and screen stars, magnates, literary lights, their names were all on the old registers in the hotel's palmy days.

In the late 1880s the saline bath treatment was developed at Bad Nauheim in Germany and gained vogue in this country.

An astute promoter, William E. Leffingwell, studied the medicinal properties of the Deer Lick Springs, famous since pioneer times. Analysis showed the mineral waters to be five times as strong as Nauheim's. Leffingwell bought the Glen Springs property in 1890, abandoning an option he had obtained on Murray Hill at Mount Morris. The year before natural gas had been discovered on the land.

That was the beginning of a spa that made the name of Watkins Glen world famous.

Now there is only a ghostly silence on the hill of glamorous memory.

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After the Sullivan invasion, the Senecas stole back to the Catharine Marsh, south of Watkins, seeking, like the wild deer, the salt deposited there for centuries. In later days the Indians would borrow kettles of the first settlers and return them filled with brine.

But it was not until 1892 that the salt industry was developed at the head of the lake. In that year the Glen Salt Company, now the International, drilled a well on the west shore, north of the village. In 1896 the Watkins Salt Company was started at the southern rim of the lake.



Ever since, Watkins Glen has had the two big salt plants that, with the resort business, form its commercial backbone.

Derricks rise in the hillsides, marking the salt wells, into which heated water is pumped. Saturated with salt brine, it is raised to the surface and the salt extracted by a process of evaporation.

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My first call, after alighting from a bus at Watkins Glen one bleak October morning, took me up a flight of stairs to the office of the Express. I asked to see the editor.

A slender old man with the face of a scholar stuck out his hand.

"I am Frank Severne. The accent is on the last syllable."

Frank W. Severne, now in his 83d year, is one of the most remarkable men I have ever met. A successful publisher, a political power in Schuyler County for years, an orator, a poet and a philosopher, an expert checker player, he has until recently traveled the streets of the village, unaided.

You don't think all that is so remarkable?

But Frank W. Severne has been stone blind since the age of 11!

When he was a boy, cracking walnuts in his home, a shell flew up, and struck him in the eye. Inflammation set in, the other eye became affected and he lost his sight. He attended the State School for the Blind at Batavia and then went into business at Watkins Glen.

In 1895 he married the devoted wife who has been "his eyes" ever since. At the age of 49 he embarked in the newspaper business. He served two terms as county superintendent of the poor before the word "welfare" came into vogue.

For 36 years he has been a member of the Board of Visitors of the School for the Blind, the only graduate ever so honored. He now is president of the board. He has attended many conventions of workers for the blind all over the country. A staunch Republican, he has been called upon to preside at many political rallies and knows all the dignitaries of the party in the state.

Severne thinks politicians are making a mistake today in not maintaining closer personal touch with the voters. He favors a return to the old convention system of naming candidates, and he thinks there is far too much centralized control in government.

On his 80th birthday, 150 members of the Schuyler County Young Republican Club gave him a dinner in the old Jefferson Hotel. The party was to have been a surprise but newshawk that he is, Severne found out about it two days in advance.

The sightless editor lives on the western shore of Seneca Lake. "I often commune with the waters," he said. And out of his world of shadows he once wrote an ode to the lake. I quote a few lines:

*"The shadows creep along the shore  
The sun sinks down behind the hill  
The robin's evening song is o'er  
And Seneca's heaving breast is still."*

\* \* \* \* \*

It was my first visit to Watkins Glen since a summer Sunday 10 years ago in the piping days of peace. Then the village was full of cars and tourists, taking pictures of each other and buying scenic postcards. The entrance to the Glen was a merry babel of voices.

In this wartime October the town was stripped of all that tinsel. The Glen was deserted. The village was just a pleasant, prosperous rural trading center. It was one of the first days of the pheasant hunting season and the red caps and brown coats of the hunters added a touch of color to the village scene.

The Glen itself needs no human embellishment. In summer or in fall, in peace or war, the door in the mountainside is always open. There is no intermission for the Pageant of the Waters; no last chapter to the Romance of the Rocks.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now French Catharine's Town of song and story.

A bus ride of three miles from Watkin Glen, along the salt-laden Catharine Marsh and the Seneca Lake inlet, and you come to

the old town now called Montour Falls, where cascading waters seem almost to spill into the principal street.

The hub of seven glens and 20 waterfalls, its hills are full of scenic splendor, not so spectacular or as well publicized as those of Watkins.

More than 160 years have gone by since Sullivan's troopers put the torch to the gambrel-roofed palace of Queen Catharine, since they leveled the Indian village with all its wealth of corn and fruit. Twice since then the name of the town has been changed but somehow, the spirit of that long dead, half-breed sovereign seems still to hover over the scene.

Her name is perpetuated in the Catharine Marsh and the Catharine Creek as well as in the present name of the village. And in the heart of Montour Falls, a sign proclaims "Catharine Spring."

People down that way pronounce it "Cathar-eeen," accenting and dragging out the last syllable.

\* \* \* \* \*

Catharine Montour—there are mystery and romance in the very name.

Strange mixed blood ran in her veins. Her great grandfather was a French immigrant to Canada who married a Huron wife. Her grandmother was the famous Madam Montour, who as a girl was adopted by Frontenac, the French governor of Canada, and whose husband was an Oneida chief. Her mother was "French Margaret," wedded to a Mohawk. Her sister was Queen Esther, "The Fiend of Wyoming," so called because she wielded tomahawk and fire brand as fiercely as any of her warriors at the massacre of the Pennsylvania settlers.

French Catharine married Thomas Hudson, a noted Seneca chieftain. They lived in Pennsylvania on the banks of the Tioga until his death. Then his widow stayed for a time at Canisteo before she came to rule over the important outpost of the Seneca empire that bore her name, although to the Indians it was Shequaga.



It was to Catharine's Town that the broken remnants of the Seneca-Tory army fled after their defeat at Newtown. The queen wanted to make a stand but her advisers counseled flight. So when Sullivan's men, after a precarious night march through dismal swamps and narrow defiles, came to French Catharine's Town, they were greeted only by an aged squaw, who had been left behind, and some hungry, yelping dogs.

Catharine fled with her cohorts to Fort Niagara. There is a tradition in Montour Falls that she is buried near the site of her old palace.

Robert W. Chambers in his "Hidden Children," devoted much space to Catharine's Town, which he called a "dark and fearsome place," where the son of the queen, "Amochol, the Red Sorcerer, held pagan ritual." It is a fantastic and gripping tale but much of it is unsubstantiated by history.

Montour Falls, first named Havana, was settled in 1788. When the Chemung Canal was built, it became an important port as the head of navigation on the Seneca Lake inlet.

About the village there persists an air of past consequence. The town reeks with history. The town hall, with its stately dome, beside the waters of Shequaga Falls, is a reminder of the county seat war that Havana lost. Beside it, the former jail and another old county office are now private residences. The adjacent village library, where Mrs. George Layton, a painstaking historian, presides, is a veritable reservoir of regional lore.

The town owed much of its early prestige to Charles Cook. He promoted the Chemung Canal. He built mills and stores and the massive Montour House, which still stands after 93 years, although no longer used as an inn. As state senator, Cook pushed through the creation of Schuyler County over the agonized protests of three other counties from which it was carved. And he made Havana the county seat.

A bachelor, he built picturesque St. Paul's Episcopal Church in the shadow of the falls as a memorial to a girlhood sweetheart who died. He engaged a French artisan to fresco the interior in Old World style.

But his crowning accomplishment was the People's College. Years ahead of his time, Charles Cook around 1860 conceived the idea of a school which would combine book learning with practical and related work, a system followed today at Antioch College and Rochester's Mechanics Institute. Cook wangled a federal grant and on the southern outskirts of the village, a square, plain and sturdy six-story building arose, built from bricks made in an adjoining field.

In 1866 his People's College lost its grant and it became a Masonic school and orphanage until in 1872, Elbert Cook, a brother of Charles and a self made man who late in life espoused the Baptist faith, transformed it into Cook Academy, a preparatory school for boys.

It has remained that ever since, housed in the old People's College. From its ivy covered walls have gone out many graduates who became famous. Among them was Wellington Koo, the Chinese statesman.

I made a pilgrimage to the Academy. The campus was as quiet and deserted as the lonely hill where perches the abandoned Glen Springs Hotel. There were no boyish shouts, no scampering of young feet. The boys who ordinarily would be conning their lessons at Cook Academy were learning sterner lessons—in the uniform of their country at war.

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In 1843 a boy was born in Havana, who was christened David Bennett Hill. That boy became Governor of the state, a United States Senator, a power in the national Democracy, "The Sage of Wolfert's Roost," whose bald head and drooping mustache were familiar to every newspaper reader.

In 1910 an imposing array of notables accompanied David B. Hill on his last journey back to the scenes of his boyhood, to stand with bared heads at an open grave in the village cemetery, where was laid to rest Catharine's Town's most famous son.

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Montour Falls (it changed its name in 1890) never rivaled Watkins Glen as a health or summer resort. But for 35 years after 1878 the water cure and magnesia spring of Bethsada were widely patronized.

Among the many glens among its fringe of rugged hills, Montour Glen is outstanding. Waters descend 400 feet through one and one-quarter miles of rocky canyon, in alternating rapids, falls and pools, finally to spill over a 156-foot cliff, at the head of the village's principal street.

Louis Philippe, the royal French exile, once sketched those Shequaga Falls, which means in the Indian language, "tumbling waters." His handiwork hangs in the Louvre today.

And long ago a Seneca chief, the Demosthenes of his tribe, inflamed with white man's firewater and resplendent in a red jacket, pitted his mighty voice against the thunder of the falling waters.

French Catharine's Town, Havana, Montour Falls—old town, by any name, time seems to stand still beside your tumbling waters.





# The Lovely Vixen

**S**ENECA LAKE is a lovely vixen.

Long ago the Red Men became enamored of the 36-mile-long sheet of cold and shining water. They gave her the name

of the proudest nation of their Confederacy. They made her wooded slopes, where falling waters tinkled in sylvan glens, their happy hunting ground. But they never trusted her.

She was like a well loved but wayward child, a creature of swiftly changing moods, whose outward beauty masked much of treachery and wantonness.

Seneca was never like her sister lakes. She seemed to be bottomless. She seldom was frozen over, even in the coldest winter. In her depths lurked perfidious currents that pulled the strongest swimmers down to death. She was given to gusts of temper and inexplicable tides that drove the war canoes against the rocks.

But she could be so charming when she smiled that the savages forgave her tantrums and her guile.

And they held her in deepest awe, for supernatural voices spoke out of her spring-fed depths—with the dull rumble of hidden guns.

They came to know other and more terrible guns along the lake—the cannon and flintlocks of Sullivan's Colonials. As the retreating Senecas looked back toward their lost paradise, they saw the smoke of their burning villages mounting in the eastern sky.

French Catharine's Town, Kendaia, Kanadesaga, the stronghold of their king—they were wind blown ashes. The granary that had fed King George's Red Coats so long, the rich crops that the Indians had left ripening in the fields, they were only blackened embers. The orchards of apple and peach and plum, ripe for the harvest, they were but twisted ruin. With fire and sword Sullivan was leveling the Long House.

When in that September of 1779, the haze of autumn brooded over the lakes, Seneca's hidden guns boomed a deep and funeral note. It was a requiem for the Keepers of the Western Door.

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Then Seneca Lake became a pathway of white man's empire.

Sullivan's New Englanders and Pennsylvanians, remembering the rich promises of the Lakes Country, returned to the scene of their invasion—as settlers. Scattered cabins in the clearings grew into busy settlements. From 1788 until well into the 1830's a mighty tide of migration surged along the lake. Canals were dug to connect the lakes and the rivers and the products of the new Genesee Country flowed through a chain of inland waterways to the Tidewater ports.

In time the era of the canal passed. The frontier moved toward the setting sun and many bold pioneers moved with it. The railroads came, then the automobile to shove the picturesque old steamboats off the scene. Most of the once bustling ports became drowsy hamlets. Geneva, at the foot of the largest of the Finger Lakes, grew into a flourishing and distinctive city. Watkins, at its head, became an important health resort. In between, the fertile countryside along the shores and on the ridges between the slim blue lakes lapsed into a pleasant slumber.

Then, across the ocean, a mad, little, rabble-rousing tyrant stirred a cauldron of hate and bigotry and death; called his "master race" to arms and set the whole world ablaze.



Suddenly Seneca's quiet eastern shore awoke to find itself no longer a serene strip of farms and villages and summer cottages, but the heart of a vast military reservation. In 1941, as in 1779, the acrid smoke of burning buildings tintured the air. They were the abandoned barns of American farmers, in retreat before another invasion. Their hearts were sad at leaving the acres on which their fathers had lived before them, but they were not bitter. Their government, arming for a war not of its choosing, had called for this sacrifice, had requisitioned thousands of acres of Seneca shore line, to build there, first, a huge munitions depot, and later, the second largest naval training station in America.

Armies of workmen, fleets of trucks, shiny new railroad tracks, miles of wire fencing, din and confusion came to Kendaia, the "Appletown" of the Indians. Powder igloos rose where Seneca huts and weather beaten farm houses had stood. Soon little Kendaia was blotted out as completely as in the time of Sullivan's raid. To the northward, the lights of a city of sprawling barracks, housing 45,000 bluejackets, glittered in the evening sky for miles along the lake.

The face of the landscape, the whole pattern of life along Seneca's waters were transformed in two short years. War had wrought metamorphosis again in the land of the lake guns.

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There are those who live along the lake and scoff at the story of those guns, asserting that "I have never heard them."

There are others who will swear that often they have heard the uncanny thundering, most pronounced at twilight, in the late summer or early fall and most distinct around Lodi Landing and Dresden. They say the booming is loudest when it presages disaster, as the flood of 1935.

That cannonading was very real to the superstitious Indians who read omens and portents into all the manifestations of nature. This mysterious rumble from the depths of this unpredictable lake,



what did it mean? Maybe the drums of their forefathers were calling them to the war path. Maybe the God of Thunder was angry. Maybe an evil spirit dwelt in the lake that had no bottom.

Around the lake guns was woven the legend of "The Wandering Chief." In the days when the Senecas were the masters of the Lakes Country, bravest and tallest of all their warriors was the young Chief Agayenthah.

One June day, when he was trailing a bear along the lake, a sudden electric storm drove him to seek refuge under a great tree at the edge of a cliff. There was a blinding flash of lightning, an ear-splitting crash. The God of Thunder had dealt both chief and tree a fatal blow. Together they tumbled in the lake. Together they floated out on its surface.

The next day, when storm clouds again gathered and the guns were calling, there drifted out on to the bosom of the lake what appeared to be the trunk of a tree, erect and protruding two feet out of the water. It floated slowly and majestically around the lake, like a funeral barge. It was seen again and again, always in the death-like stillness that precedes the storm. To this day when the lake drums roll, people say "The Wandering Chief is on the march." Only clumsy white men, lacking the Indians' instinct for the right descriptive word, have sometimes called the apparition, "The Wandering Jew."

There also is the Spirit Boatman, a spectral warrior paddling a canoe in the moonlight around the Painted Rocks, at the southeastern edge of the lake, near Watkins. After the Sullivan expedition, crude images were found scrawled on the granite sides of the palisade there. The pictures were supposed to have told the story of a skirmish with the Yankee invaders in which the Senecas were worsted and driven over the rocks. The journals of Sullivan's men give no hint of any such encounter. But there is no question about the pictures on the rocks, whatever their meaning may be.

Science has reared its learned head to explain the mystery of the lake guns. The wise men say the sound is caused by the poppings of natural gas released from the rock rifts at the bottom of the lake. When the gas field were developed around Tyrone in the 1920's, the boom of the guns was fainter. After the short-lived field was exhausted, they resumed their wonted thunder.

Because the lake has been frozen over only nine times in recorded history, there is a modern legend that Seneca water, placed in an automobile radiator, makes a sure-fire "anti-freeze" solution.

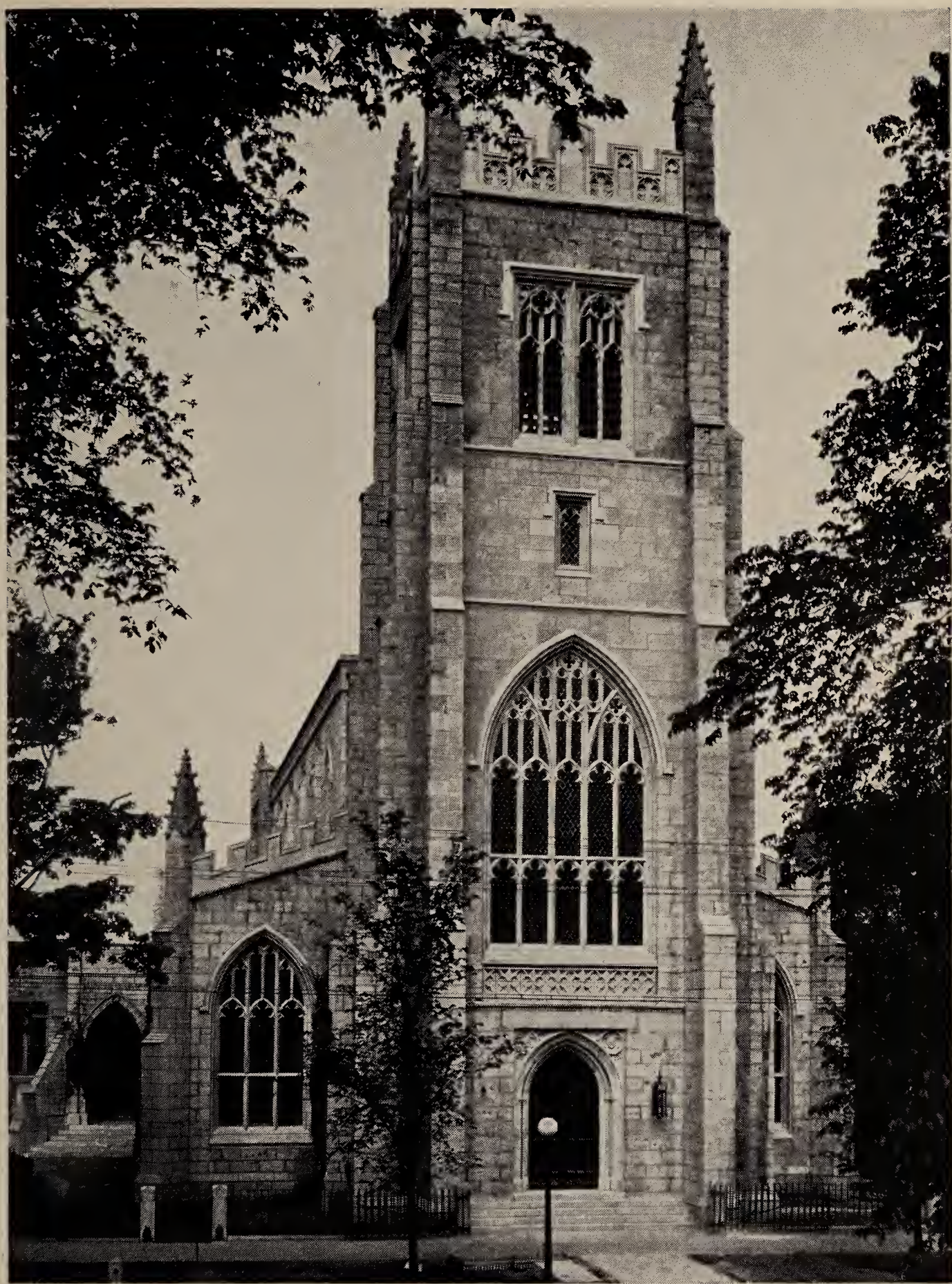
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Amid the cheers of a multitude, the sloop, Alexander, first to sail the lake, was launched at Geneva in 1796. It was one of many promotions of the far sighted land agent, Charles Williamson.

On Independence Day of 1828, the first steamboat churned the waters of the lake. It was the side wheeler, The Seneca Chief, which three years before, with De Witt Clinton aboard, had led the grand parade, signaling the opening of the Erie Canal.

The Seneca Chief was the forerunner of a long line of steamboats the beginning of an era that lasted for 80 years. Among them were the Chemung, the Canadesaga, the Ben Loder, in its day the largest on the lakes, whose huge boilers burned wood (it became a tow boat, once dragging 70 canal boats in its wake and ended in flames), the John Arnot, which also burned; the Richard Stevens, the Watkins, which became the S. T. Arnot; the triple-decked P. H. Field, renamed the Onondaga, which in the heyday of Watkins Glen, carried as many as 1,000 passengers and which in 1898 was destroyed by dynamite in an elaborately planned spectacle after it had housed a show troupe beset with smallpox; the W. W. Langdon, later called the Schuyler; the W. B. Dunning, the D. S. Magee; the Elmira, and the last of the long procession, the Otetiani, rechristened the Seneca, which sank at Watkins in 1908.





*Trinity Church On Geneva's Aristocratic Hilltop*





In pioneer days there was the Goodwin Ferry, which, with sails and oars as its motive power, ran between North Hector (Valois) and Starkey. When the wind was inadequate, passengers had to man the oars.

The old docks and landings are rotted away, the old towns that were once important ports of call, are now merely rural trading centers. Some have vanished altogether. Hector Falls, Lodi Landing, Peach Orchard, Dey's Landing, Glenora, Fir Tree Point, Starkey Point, Dresden—their yesterday of commercial glory is "one with Nineveth and Tyre."

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In frontier days, busiest of all the Seneca ports was Hector Falls, known then as Factory Falls, because around her cascade there clustered flour and woolen mills, a foundry, potash works and a considerable settlement.

In 1823 the schooner Mary and Hannah, out of Hector Falls, made navigation history when it slid into the Port of New York with a cargo of wheat and butter and beans, first vessel to pass through the completed eastern portion of the Erie Canal, via Seneca Lake and river and a private lock at Waterloo.

It was in little Hector that the word "teetotaler" is said to have originated. In 1818 the local temperance society was divided into two factions. One wanted a total abstinence pledge to include beer and wines. The other aimed only to curb drinking of distilled spirits. When the vote was recorded, the teller placed a "T" before the names of those who signed the total abstinence ballot and they were called "T Totalers."

\* \* \* \* \*

Valois Castle is gone from under the hill on the east shore. Years ago an international lawyer of that name chose the spot for his summer home, a remodeled farm house which he converted into a mansion. An ardent fisherman, he was attracted by the black bass ground nearby, as well as the sylvan beauty of the spot. He

imported many rare articles of furniture from France, including a bed in which the Empress Eugenie was supposed to have slept. Valois drilled for salt on his land, obtained enough gas to light his castle—but no salt. After the World War the property was sold and operated as an inn until one night a few years ago it went up in flames. Now there is only a bramble-covered heap of ruins to tell of Valois Castle. The hamlet on the highway that was in other years known as North Hector perpetuates the name of the lawyer.

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Always rivals were the neighboring villages with the classical names—Lodi and Ovid. Lodi Landing was a busy port in the steamboat period. Now it is in the center of a rich agricultural and orchard belt. Near Lodi the lake reaches its greatest depth, 612 feet. Because its Silver Thread Falls, a 160-foot pillar of water, is off the main road, tourists miss one of the scenic highlights of the region. Above the cascade towers the Lehigh Railroad bridge. The scene is reminiscent of the Upper Falls of the Genesee at Portage.

The vanguard of Sullivan's troops camped at Lodi on their swing around the lakes in 1779. Twenty years after, a settler felled a big oak on the site of their bivouac. In its crotch he found a horse-shoe imbedded in the wood, placed there by one of the troopers in buff and blue.

Around Lodi the population is nearly 100 per cent old American stock. During the zenith of the Ku Klux Klan in the tumultuous twenties, more than one fiery cross blazed above Seneca water, where years before glowed the council fires of the first 100 per cent Americans to live in the Lakes Country.

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Travelers remember Ovid because of the "Three Sisters" on the hill—the picturesque, old red brick, white-pillared buildings, the court house, library and jail, all in a row, at the turn of the road at the village's edge.



Seneca is one of only 24 double shire counties in America. Her courts have been held alternately at Ovid, and Waterloo for more than a century. Ovid was selected as the first county seat in 1804 and the first court was held in Pioneer Andrew Dunlop's barn.

Ovid lies between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Settled in 1788, it was a cross roads of empire in the days of the fluctuating frontier. In 1812 only two townships in the state were larger, New York and Albany.

George T. Franklin, Ovid attorney, has delved deeply into the lore of the region. He unearthed among other things the fact that slavery came to the lakes with the pioneers, as witnessed by an old record in which "William Himrod, tanner and currier in the Town of Ovid on August 21, 1801, does certify that a mulatto child named Hero was born of my black slave, Sarah."

And here is "The Story of the Bound Boy," just as it was told to George Franklin on a bitter winter's night when he was a small boy and which has been told to many another child in the Lakes Country ever since the pioneer time in which it happened:

"It was just such a night as this and the poor boy had done something that had greatly displeased the well-to-do man for whom he had to work without pay—dressed in cast off clothes and fed on what was left on the table when everybody else was through eating—he thought he could stand it no longer and was sick and sore from the whipping he had received, so he decided to run away. He was wearing a pair of the man's old castoff boots with no socks and his clothes were not very warm at best, being full of holes and nearly worn out anyway. He started out into the cold wind and was no more than gone when his master found it out and started out after him.

"There was a crust on the snow and the moon was bright when it could shine out through the clouds and soon he could see the man coming after him. He was terribly afraid and ran and ran but in

spite of all his running he got colder and colder and finally after a chase of nearly 10 miles the man caught up to him and took him into a barn near the old log church, took off the old boots and all of the old clothes and then left him to shift for himself. Several hours later the man who owned the barn drove his sleigh in and heard a strange sound—a whimpering like that of an animal in distress and he hunted for the noise and found the poor boy shivering in the hay. Both of his feet were frozen so that one whole foot had to come off and all the toes on the other foot.

“It made the man who found the poor boy very angry and he got the minister up to come to his house where he had taken the boy in. The minister found out all about what had happened and took it up with the law and they made the man who had taken back the clothes he had given the poor boy to wear pay to the poormaster a large sum every year for many, many years for his keep because the poor boy never could earn enough by his work to keep him.”

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There are many picturesque villages in the land of glens and gorges.

There is Burdett northeast of Watkins Glen, with its seven hills, like ancient Rome. In the steeple of its 117-year-old Presbyterian Church hangs a bell that once rang in another, older vineyard country across the sea—Malaga in Spain. The bell that for half a century pealed out the hours in a Spanish convent found its way to New York and finally to a Presbyterian belfry in an up-state hill village.

Glenora was once Big Stream and a lively lake port. Now it is a charming summer colony. At Fayette, the first tile drains ever used in America were put in the ground by John Johnston in 1835 after he had sent to England for them. Starkey is famous for her old academy, now the Lakemont School.

There is a blue marker before an ancient house under old shade trees in Dresden. It proclaims the birthplace of Robert G. Ingersoll,



Civil War soldier, silver tongued politico, best known as the foremost agnostic of his time, whose very name used to send shivers through the Bible Belts of the land. Old Dresden faces the widest sheet of Seneca water, five miles of alternating bright and sullen lake.

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And there is — or was — Kendaia, the “Appletown” of the Senecas.

Sullivan’s raiders found it a village of 20 log houses, surrounded by corn fields, which they burned. They found it ringed with apple trees, which they hewed down, with all their rich burden. It must have given the thrifty New Englanders in the ranks many a twinge to destroy so much “property.” A few trees were overlooked and until recently, were still bearing after more than 150 years. At Appletown, Sullivan’s men found the showy, painted tombs of the ancestors of the tribe. These they left alone.

White settlers built a little community on the site. A couple of stores, a church, a cemetery, a huddle of houses—it was just a little place that peace-time tourists whizzing by, hardly noticed.

They notice that landscape today. For 15 miles along the lake stretches the Seneca Ordnance Depot and the Sampson Naval Training Station. At Kendaia is a 9,600 acre reservation of concrete igloos and powder store houses surrounded by 20 miles of wire.

When the War Department took over that tract in 1941, it meant that nearly 100 families had to move. They were paid for their lands, in most cases so liberally that there was no protest. They were given a chance to harvest their crops. The Relocation Administration offered to find homes for them. But it nevertheless was sad business for many whose ancestors were among the first settlers along that shore.

A year later, when the \$50,000,000, 2,700 acre Sampson project was launched, the story was the same. Only more cottagers had to leave their cherished summer havens. The whole lake shore from



Kendaia Creek, past Pontius Point, the trout fishermen's paradise; on to Bartlett Beach, went into the maw of the great naval station that was to bear the name of the Spanish War admiral who was born in nearby Palmyra.

The orders to move out came as a bewildering blow to many a resident. There were the Cranes, for instance, an elderly couple who operated a little general store and were born in the neighborhood. People like the Cranes hardly knew where to turn. They had expected to spend the rest of their days in the only community they had ever known.

The 123-year-old Baptist Church had to go, but the government spared the old burying ground. When buildings could not be sold for their lumber, they were burned. Time was of the essence.

The people accepted the situation as necessary. They knew the demands of war are inexorable. There was little recrimination. But there were saddened hearts at leaving well loved scenes.

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One summer afternoon an army captain was driving through the Seneca Ordnance Depot reservation to see that all the land-owners had left. It was deadline at Kendaia.

At one farm house he came across a young woman digging perennials from an old-fashioned flower garden. She had on a house dress. She had been crying a little and the hands that had been wielding a spade had wiped away the tears. There were smudges on her cheeks. The captain put her down as just another farm woman:

"You seem to feel worse than most. What's the matter? Didn't you get enough for your land?" the officer called out with a heavy attempt at jocular.

The woman ceased her digging, drew herself up with dignity.

"That is not it," and she smiled through her tears. "Perhaps I am more sentimental than most. It's not a matter of money. You

see I was born here. My people have always lived here. These flowers I am digging up have associations that maybe you would not understand."

The captain drove on in silence.

The young woman was Miss Veronica Maher, executive secretary of the American Red Cross in Rochester and the guiding spirit of that organization since she first came into its office in 1918, just out of Ovid High School. But every weekend she had gone back to the home place beside the lake—and now she was bidding it good-bye.

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The government projects have quickened the tempo of the countryside. Gone are the hectic days of construction that brought 15,000 workers to Sampson, to sleep in tents and autos because there was no other place to sleep. Now the situation is stabilized, but these are the liveliest days the old shore has known since the pioneers built the Chemung Canal and the first steamboat puffed up Seneca Lake.

Senecas, settlers, steamboats, slumber and now—Sampson.

The white man has kept shifting the scenes along the Indians' lake that "has no bottom, that never freezes."

But he has never curbed the willful, hoydenish spirit of the lake itself. He has not stopped the murmur of the falling waters in the rocky hillsides. He has not kept the stormy waves from dashing over old Seneca's foot, to peril the traffic on the white man's highway.

And he has never stilled the rumble of the guns—the beat of the drums beneath the waters sounding the last roll call for the Keepers of the Western Door.



# Bluejackets and Bluebloods

“ELEMENTS of the United States Navy effected a landing in considerable force along the eastern shore of Seneca Lake in 1941 and by infiltration

and through numerical superiority, have established a strong beach-head at an inhabited place, Geneva, New York.”

So might read a communique from the Lakes Country theater of action.

Seemingly it is more than a beachhead the sailors have won at the foot of Seneca Lake.

To the casual observer, Geneva, a city of 18,000, might well be a suburb of the greater city of 45,000 that lies 12 miles to the southward, where the young giant, Sampson, second largest Naval training station in America, sprawls over 2,700 acres of Seneca shore line.

Once Geneva was a serene and dignified city, with a warm charm all her own, her quiet broken only by the Saturday night influx of rural shoppers and the occasional revelry of college boys.

Now she is a roaring Naval camp.

More white caps and WAVES bob along her Exchange Street than ride the waters of the nearby lake.

The sailors have even stormed the Sacred Hill of the Old Families, the bastion of the Quality Folk; the citadel of culture and



church and college; the stately avenue of the porticoed mansions under the spreading trees—where blood alone has always been the yardstick of rank.

Workmen have invaded those South Main Street mansions with hammer and saw, have cut them up into apartments for Navy men with gold braid on their sleeves and for others alien to the Hill.

Hobart's proud orange and purple banner floats in the shadow of the Union Jack. If the shade of the beloved dean, William P. Durfee, "Durf" to generations of Hobart men, were to stroll the old campus, his mathematical wizardry would be baffled at the unfamiliar universal symbol, "V-12."

The juke boxes, blaring out "Pistol Packin' Mama," in Geneva's 20 night spots, have all but drowned out the majestic thunder of the organ in Trinity Church.

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"Boots" in bluejackets, girls in red coats—"Hi Mac—Harya, Slim"—movie houses with Navy films—even the picture postcards are nautical—"Lay that pistol down"—the very names of the saloons suggest the sea—Push and crowd—"When's the next bus to Sampson, Bud?"—voices and accents strange to the Finger Lakes, flat prairie twang, soft Southern drawl, broad Bostonese A—"Pistol Packin' Mama"—the buses roll in to disgorge their blue stream—This Babel of Bluejackets was never the Geneva I had known.

For as a callow, wide-eyed freshman just before another war, I came to know something of the old Geneva. And returning for a brief visit after 26 years, I hardly recognized the old town.

It was like seeing your dignified maiden aunt toss aside her prayer book and pince nez and swing into a strip tease.

Still I think it is only a beachhead the sailors have gained, after all. I doubt if even the massed might of the Navy can ever completely subjugate a fortress built so staunchly on the rock of an

old tradition; if all the muscles of the young giant Sampson can pull down the pillars of so sturdy a temple.

For Geneva is older than the Navy. When the United States was a province of the British Crown, she was a stronghold of the Senecas' empire; the "castle" of their hereditary king. Even as a raw, young settlement she was the hub of what gracious living and culture the backwoods held.

Geneva has many sides. She has been many things in her long lifetime. This Naval occupation may be only another interlude.

For the spirit of Geneva is the spirit of the Old Guard—and the Old Guard never surrenders.

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At the end of the 17th Century, Indian refugees from the Genesee villages destroyed by the French Denonville founded a considerable town on the present site of the White Springs Farms. The spade of the archeologist has yielded crucifix and rosary to tell of early visits there by the black robed Jesuits, first to bear the Cross into the wilds.

Later the Senecas built a new and greater village, which they called Kanadesaga, near the present State Agricultural Experiment Station. It was the scene of their council fire and the residence of their hereditary sachem or "king."

The British recognized Kanadesaga's strategic position and in 1756 Sir William Johnson, the lord of the Mohawk Valley, caused a stockade to be built of pine and oak. The Tory Walter Butler had his barracks, storehouse and residence in the village and from Kanadesaga he and the old King, Sauquanquethagtha, led their hordes of painted savages and Tory renegades to the massacres of the settlers in the Wyoming Valley.

This village of 50 well built homes amid field and orchards, was the "castle" of the Seneca king or sachem. The colonists called it "Seneca Castle." The old King was dubbed "Old Smoke" because his name meant "He who carries the smoke."

When the Yankee army reached Kanadesaga, the only human being they found there was a half naked, half starved Dutch boy, who could speak no English. He probably had been captured in one of the Pennsylvania raids. General Sullivan took a personal interest in the little chap and caused him to be adopted by a white family. But the boy soon died.

The Seneca stockade, the Tory barracks, the Indian houses and the Indian crops all went up in flames. The orchards were despoiled. Before Sullivan marched on to Canandaigua, the proud castle of the Keepers of the Western Door had been wiped off the face of the landscape. But the Americans left untouched the old tribal burying ground neath the apple trees.

Later on, when peace came and settlement began, this remained the sacred ground of the Senecas and treaties stipulated that no plow ever turn the sod there. And for years at planting time, silent Red Men came to watch the white plowmen and to see that the pledge was kept.

The Old King was supposed to have been brought back to his former stronghold for burial and the pioneers used to tell how, in the moon of the harvest, braves would journey back to the old burying ground, to stand for a few silent moments before the tomb of their King.

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Geneva was the first white settlement in the whole Genesee Country, except for the colony of the fantastic Jemima Wilkinson and her cult on Crooked (Keuka) Lake.

As early as 1788, Lark Jennings was living in a log cabin along Seneca Lake at the foot of the present Washington Street and near the old sulphur spring.

At that time, a group of land speculators, among them Hudson Valley gentry, launched a bold scheme to grab a vast tract. The law forbade purchase of land by individuals from the Indians. So the land syndicate sought a 999-year lease by treaty. The group hatched



a secession plot to create a separate state in the wilderness. They even maintained an armed force for a time, until the courts, the Federal Government and Governor Clinton combined to frustrate the "Long Lease" conspiracy.

Geneva was the center of their activities in those turbulent days because the "Long Lease" faction had its headquarters there. By 1790 there were a dozen families in the settlement.

When the New England promoters, Phelps and Gorham purchased two million acres of wildwood, Geneva was picked by Phelps as the center of the enterprise. But a survey indicated the town was outside the purchase. So Phelps shifted his land office to Canandaigua. The first survey of the Pre-emption line, so-called because it defined the limits of Massachusetts' pre-emptive rights, was shown to have been faulty, either by error or design. The new line brought Geneva within the Purchase. But for a surveyor's mistake, Geneva, and not Canandaigua, would have been the shire town of the frontier.

The Phelps and Gorham holdings passed into the hands of a British syndicate, headed by Sir William Pulteney. This sale brought to the Lakes Country one of the most arresting figures of a colorful period, Charles Williamson, the land agent. This courtly, Scottish-born, former British officer, a man of vast energy and boundless vision, played an all important part in the development of Geneva.

Williamson is credited with having named the city because he was struck by its resemblance to the Old World Geneva on the Lake Lemman. Historians have discovered that the place was called Geneva before the land agent ever laid eyes on it. But many a traveler since has seen in the town on Seneca's shores a similarity to the famous Swiss city beside another sparkling lake.

Geneva had a key place in the Williamson colonization blueprint. He planned the settlement on the wooded plateau overlook-

ing the lake. There he laid out the broad Main Street and the public square after the British pattern. Pulteney Square is still there under its old trees to tell of the land agent's dreams.

He built on that square in 1794 the finest hotel in the frontier, "The Astor House of the West." He brought from London as its landlord the famous Thomas Powell of the Thatched Cottage. When the December snows mantled the countryside, bright lights shone from the new Williamson Hotel and gay music echoed across the square. A grand ball heralded the opening of the "Astor House of the West." For that occasion there flocked to Geneva probably the strangest assortment of characters ever assembled under one roof—Southern aristocrats who had been lured to this new land through Williamson's promotions, Seneca chiefs and warriors, land promoters, adventurers, transplanted New Englanders, small settlers, backwoodsmen, hunters, trappers.

Williamson laid out terraced gardens extending from his hotel down the slopes to the lake, set out shade trees. He forbade any building across the street that would obstruct the view of the lake from the inn. It was only after he lost his position that there arose opposite the Square the quaint row of houses, with their backs to the lake, so reminiscent of Albany and Kingston and the older towns in the East, that today give South Main Street such a distinctive air.

The land agent built a mansion at Mile Point up the lake. He launched the first boat to sail Seneca water. In all his schemes, Geneva, Bath and Williamsburg and Great Sodus Bay were to be the key centers of his domain.

Geneva became a popular stopping place on the road across the state. It was incorporated in 1806 as the first village in Western New York. It was a gateway to the frontier and stage coaches and Conestoga wagons rumbled over the trail in ever growing numbers, to pull up before the splendid Williamson Hotel on the square.

The lakeside city owes much to Charles Williamson, the land



agent, the tall, gallant Scot in the blue cape who rode over the great Pulteney domain like a Centaur, ever dreaming of the future greatness of this fair new land. It was through his far flung promotions that the Southerners came to the Lakes Country, to found in Geneva a tradition of spacious living that has endured through the years.

Williamson induced the aristocratic Maryland Fitzhughs to buy land in the Genesee Country and although they eventually established their estates elsewhere, for a time they lived in Geneva and sent word back to the South of the richness of the frontier country.

In 1801 two cavalcades came jolting over the Cumberland Trail. John Nicholas and Robert Rose and their families in their ponderous coaches, with their retinue of Negro slaves, and wagons, piled high with elegant furnishings, had left their Virginia estates to establish new homes in the Lakes Country.

Nicholas settled at White Springs, site of the first Seneca town. A noble, white columned mansion stands today on the hill, flanked by ponds and in the midst of a great estate. The original buildings were destroyed by fire some 70 years ago. The present owner is Mrs. Alfred G. Lewis.

Rose built across the lake at what still is known as Rose Hill.

They were gentleman farmers, cultured, open handed people and they founded the aristocratic tradition in Geneva.

In 1827 their slaves were freed by state law but most of them remained with their former masters, to work for wages, for the gentlefolk who had sheltered them so long.

Then came the Bogerts, the Mellens, the Pattersons, the Chews, the Doxes, the Sills, the Gallaghers, the Peytons, the Swifts, the Ver Plancks, the De Lanceys, the Lees, and many others. Southern patricians, transplanted to the North; retired New York merchants, descendants of Dutch patroons, with a sprinkling of churchmen and professors—these people gave Geneva a social tone and a way of life that was different than any other community in the land along the lakes.



In 1818 Elkanah Watson wrote: "Geneva is now not only an elegant but a salubrious village and distinguished for its refinement and elevated character of its inhabitants."

More than a century later, a native Genevan, Warren Hunting Smith, of the Yale faculty, wrote a little book built around Watson's quotation. He titled it "Geneva, New York—An Elegant and Salubrious Village."

Warren Smith knew whereof he wrote. He was reared in the rarefied atmosphere of the Hill and he painted an intriguing and vivid picture of the South Main Street that used to be.

In the high ceilinged rooms of the mansions on the Hill, behind the white pillars, lived gentlefolk of good taste and good manners, who had fine linen, old family silver and china, who collected rare books and paintings, who traveled much, who were never noisy or ostentatious.

Their men knew the correct way to carry a stick; their ladies languidly sketched the scenic beauties of the lake. They rode in carriages behind sleek horses, driven by well trained servants.

They entertained distinguished guests. Martin Van Buren, John James Audubon, William H. Seward knew the hospitality of Geneva's drawing rooms.

They were of the leisure class. They lived mainly on inherited wealth. None of them was enormously rich. Some of them were downright poor. But money did not count. Birth was all that mattered. Newly rich tradesmen who tried to crash the gates of the Hill retreated before a wall of stony indifference.

There was no land holding, fox hunting dynasty as in the Genesee Valley. There was merely a gracious, easy way of life. Little old spinster sisters, like the fictitious "Misses Elliott" of Warren Smith's later book, even after their resources shrank to the vanishing point, still held their heads high as they minced down South Main Street, in all their shabby gentility. They still *belonged*.

The people of the Hill wrote little volumes of poetry which they published at their own expense. They painted a bit, largely for their own amusement, although one of their sons, Arthur G. Dove, attained celebrity in the world of art.

They married within their own circle until nearly everybody on the Hill were cousins.

Always there were Hobart College and Trinity Church to give the proper cultural touch. The social orbit revolved around the church, cradle of the Episcopal faith in Western New York, whose Gothic tower has survived fire and the years, still to dominate the South Main Street scene. It was fashionable for the elite to teach the Negro children in Trinity's Sunday School. Anybody could teach white children.

At one time Geneva housed so many old maids and retired clergymen that the city was dubbed, "Saints' Retreat and Old Maids' Paradise."

Fortunes might melt away, the old mansions might pass into alien hands. It did not matter. Eccentricities were forgiven if the eccentric one belonged. And belonging was a matter of birth.

Such was the way of life in one part of Geneva, whose elegance had its heyday in the 1880s and '90s.

Snorting, smelly automobiles, country clubs, jazz, a new pushing smartness, get-rich-quick interlopers came—and the old order yielded, inch by inch. Too, so many of the Old Families died off—without issue.

Only the remnants of the old regime now guard the redoubt on the Hill.

It must be remembered that the Hill of the Quality Folk, despite its glamor and traditions, was—and is—only one part of many-sided Geneva.

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If you approach Geneva from the west, you are immediately impressed by the grace and stateliness of the old town. Before you

spreads a vista of mellow old campus, pillared mansions, old Colonial row houses, all whispering of a glorious past—and one of the most distinctive Main Streets in America.

But if you approach Geneva from the east, where the lake in wanton mood sometimes sends her waves splashing high over the road, your first impression is bound to be vastly different. The picture is drab and sooty and dingy—railroad tracks, smoke-stained buildings, factories, an undistinguished downtown section—and in the new Geneva, the eternal raucous strains of “Pistol Packin’ Mama.”

Even in pioneer times, there were always the Hill and the Bottom, two different worlds. Williamson planned the commercial center on the plateau above the lake. That dream never came true. Trade and industry stayed at the bottom of the hill although a railroad dared to edge its way along the lake shore, hidden under the brow of the Sacred Hill.

The city grew and prospered. It was set in a rich farming country and Geneva became its trading center. Steamboats, railroads, industries came until more and more smoke rolled out over Seneca water. Nurseries flourished on the borders of the town. Humble homes spread all over the Bottom and along the railroad tracks, far from Trinity’s lordly tower.

Today Geneva has a genuine Little Italy, much more picturesque than Rochester’s. It also has a sizeable Syrian colony. There must always be hewers of wood and drawers of water, even in “an elegant and salubrious village.”

And there were always the Irish, the lovable, warm hearted, rollicking Irish, to give the old town life and color. They went into trade—and very definitely into politics. The Old Families never controlled the political destinies of Geneva. Maybe they never wanted to. At any rate, in a traditional Republican county, elections



in Geneva are never cut and dried. Political campaigns are bitterly fought. Wards along the railroad tracks sometimes upset the apple cart.

Despite a deceptive air of subdued gentility, Geneva has always been known as one of the sportiest little cities in the state. Her old race track at the eastern border of town, is still green in the memories of old timers. Geneva has always liked prize fights and cock fights and games of chance. Her sports are good sports and good losers. Geneva fights hard and fights cleanly.

Before the advent of Dudley DeGroot and the renaissance of football at the University of Rochester, Hobart and the bigger, far wealthier college beside the Genesee, traditional rivals for more than half a century, were pretty evenly matched on the gridiron. The Hobart game at the end of the Varsity season was a Rochester institution.

For these games there would come up from Geneva a little band of the most loyal fans any college ever had. What they lacked in numbers, they made up in spirit and color. Their band was a ragmuffin affair beside the smartly uniformed, high stepping musicians of the great Eastman School.

The Hobart rooters were vastly outnumbered in the stands. But compared with the rabidly partisan, wildly cheering, spontaneously vibrant little huddle of Genevans in one corner of the field, the far vaster Rochester "cheering" section was a mausoleum.

Win or lose, the Hobart warriors and the Hobart rooters never said quits.

But has the human spirit ever been measured in terms of endowments or stadia?

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"Gentlemen, I have here the application of one Elizabeth Blackwell of Philadelphia for admission to the Geneva Medical College as a student. I am submitting it for your approval. What is your decision?"

Smilingly, the dean looked over the roomful of young students in long tailed coats, stocks and sideburns.

The year was 1847 and the scene was barnlike Geneva Medical College, on a hill overlooking Seneca Lake.

The students received the communication with shouts of laughter. Of course it was just a hoax, inspired by some rival school. The dean's smile told them that he, too, regarded it as a joke. A woman studying medicine? A woman rolling pills, taking pulses and delivering babies? It was preposterous; it was unthinkable—in 1847.

So the young men voted with a whoop to accept the application and proceeded to draft a long winded, facetious resolution in reply, which stated their conviction that "a pretty girl should do much to make medicine interesting."

A few weeks later, to their stupefied amazement, a slim, serious faced girl of 26, demure in dark clothes, not pretty but self possessed and gracious, presented herself at the office of the dean. Elizabeth Blackwell had come to Geneva Medical College.

Her letter had been no joke. For years this British-born school teacher had fought stubbornly to gain entrance to a medical school, only to be met with refusals, sometimes accompanied by ridicule.

All the nine years that Elizabeth had been teaching, she had been obsessed with one ambition. More than anything else in the world she wanted to be a doctor. People laughed at her but she spent all her spare time poring over fat books of medicine. She had knocked in vain at the portals of every medical school in the east until she wrote that fateful letter to Geneva.

During her two years there, it is recorded that she conducted herself with "propriety and discretion." Her position was a difficult one, a lone girl among scores of men. She was barred from delicate surgical operations. When she was present, frankness evaporated from classroom discussions. Geneva society ostracized her. Professional careers were not the thing for young ladies.



Nevertheless in 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell, her eyes clouded with happy tears, clutched a hard-won roll of parchment, the first medical diploma ever granted to a woman in America.

Her later career was a distinguished one. She studied abroad. She founded women's medical schools in New York and London. She wrote scientific books.

An historical marker stands today along Geneva's august South Main Street at the site of the school where she studied and which burned down in the 1870s. A dormitory of the nearby William Smith College for women bears the name of Blackwell House, a testimonial to the changed status of her sex.

Four years ago Hollywood laid plans for a movie built around the life of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. But it never materialized. Maybe, after the war, it will be resurrected from some film mogul's desk and the Geneva of 1847 will live again on the silver screen.

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Hobart is one of the oldest colleges in the state. It also is one of the smallest and is far from being the wealthiest.

The college was cradled in the Episcopal faith when this land was very young. In 1822 Bishop John Henry Hobart established it as Geneva College and picked its site above Seneca's waters. It was a union of Fairfield Theological School and Geneva Academy. The latter school had its roots deep in the thinly settled frontier, for it was founded in 1796.

Through a grant from Trinity Church in New York, conditioned on the establishment of a branch divinity school, two buildings arose on the hill. Geneva Hall and Trinity Hall are still there after nearly 125 years.

Despite its Episcopal origin, Hobart's charter, granted in 1825, contained a guarantee of absolute religious freedom to all members, regardless of denomination. It introduced a democratic form of education to America with the establishment of an "English" course, in addition to the traditional "classical" course. This forerunner of



the modern scientific curriculum was designed to "train farmers, mechanics, manufacturers and merchants in direct reference to the practical business of life."

From 1834 to 1872, when it was removed to Syracuse, the Medical College was part of Geneva College, renamed in 1851 in honor of its saintly founder.

Little Hobart, born in a spirit of liberalism, has adhered through the years to that tradition.

Hobart has weathered the shock of three major wars and many a financial crisis. The old college has given far more than it ever received. Its gifts have been the intangible things. It has inoculated thousands with its generous, tolerant spirit. Hobart never sought to mould mankind into any narrow, rigid pattern.

Her students were never paragons. Hobart regarded the exuberance and foibles of youth with kindly understanding. Even in the early days, the sons of wealthy churchmen were inclined to revelry and pranks. In recent years the collegians have found delight in draping with the proper garments the nude female figure that stands in dignified old Pulteney Square as a World War I memorial.

Despite her aristocratic surroundings, not only the wealthy and high born came to Hobart. The doors were opened to many a farm boy from Oaks Corners and Benton Center, to sons of Irish Catholic policemen from the teeming cities of the East, as well. Sometimes, stalwart lads have been enrolled who were more familiar with forward passes and wing backs than calculus and Chaucer.

A half century ago, a young man named Hall was a student at Hobart. He cut no great figure on the campus, completed his education elsewhere, became a clergyman, married a rich woman and settled down as a rather obscure rector in a New Jersey town. Suddenly his name was read by millions in bold, black headlines. He was the Rev. Edward Wheeler Hall, principal in one of America's most sensational murders, the Halls-Mills case, with all its fantastic back-

drop of rector-choir singer clandestine romance, wealth, mystery, "Pig Woman," Lovers' Lane and the fierce white light of nationwide publicity.

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In 1906 William Smith, a wealthy, woman-hating, bachelor nurseryman, gave half a million dollars to found a woman's college, whose courses would be co-ordinate with Hobart's. As a result William Smith College for women arose on the hilltop above the older campus. It is ironic to note that the former residence of this misogynist is now an old ladies' home.

Right now, the "Billy Smith" girls live off the campus. Navy men, taking V-12 training at Hobart, live in the girls' former dormitories.

I chanced to be on the Hobart campus on a gray October afternoon. It was the eve of the first V-12 graduation and the military review that was to feature the ceremonies on the morrow was being rehearsed. It was an imposing sight—more than 200 young men marching in straight blue lines to martial airs.

As I watched, my thoughts ran back more than a quarter of a century to another October day, the year before that other war. Boswell Field had not been built then and the present Navy drill ground was Hobart's football arena. Hamilton's warriors had come to Geneva to renew an old gridiron feud. I remembered how the crowd milled along the roped-in sidelines of that little field. There was a grandstand but few stayed in it. It was too thrilling a battle. Probably the football was ragged enough, according to big college standards. Hobart won in the last few minutes of play and the town rang that night with the victory songs of the Orange and Purple.

And now in 1943, the bugles were calling and blue clad youths were marching, preparing for a sterner conflict, on that same old college battleground.

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Vignettes of Geneva—they are innumerable. The stately city is full of landmarks, each with its story of a bygone day.

There is 102-year-old Trinity Church, birthplace of the Episcopal diocese in 1838. The parish itself began in 1806. Only Zion Church in Avon is older. Within the last decade, flames raged through the edifice, which has been rebuilt to conform wherever possible to the original design, copied from Trinity in New York. Once the Geneva church had a quartet composed of Mr. Fox, Mr. Fowle, Mrs. Bear and Mrs. Partridge.

Everywhere in the city the spires rise heavenward. Geneva seems to be a city of churches and most of them are noble specimens of architecture.

Pulteney Square is redolent of history. The pinkish gray apartment house there is on the site of the pioneer Williamson Hotel, finest hostelry west of the Hudson in its day. Later on it was the Hygienic Institute, a noted health resort, piping its mineral waters from the old spring at the foot of precipitous Washington Street. Once the water was bottled and shipped away. A stock company was formed, issued handsome certificates, but the bottling venture was unprofitable. The old spring is still there. It has been capped but the pungent odor still pervades the air.

Genesee Park, under its shade trees and flanked by old homes, is reminiscent of Rochester's Livingston Park. The deed of the park to the city provided that it should always carry the name of Franklin Park, the fence must be ever maintained and no buildings permitted there. Every one of the provisions has been violated.

On the night of September 22, 1929, as a part of the sesquicentennial celebration of the Sullivan Expedition, a thousand bonfires glowed along miles of Finger Lakes shoreline like the Indian watch fires of old. At White Springs Farms, site of the ancient Indian village, a huge fire burned and 50,000 people gathered to see pioneer days re-enacted in pageantry, while the dirigible Los Angeles floated overhead.



Venerable landmark is the Lafayette Tree. It tells of that festive day in 1825 when the aging French marquis, a hero of the American Revolution, visited Geneva on his tour of the United States. Near the inn, the former Maple Hill mansion, in all its pillared majesty, is the giant Balm of Gilead tree under which he is supposed to have rested and where the welcoming Geneva delegation met his cavalcade on the western outskirts of the city. And in the stables, called the "Priority," is the carriage, which, drawn by six white horses, bore Lafayette through the streets of Geneva while maidens, clad in white, scattered flowers in his path and sang the songs of liberty.

Those stables have their own story. Once they reputedly housed one of the first herds of Durham cattle brought to the United States. At that time the Maple Hill and White Springs estates were owned by James O. and Lucius Sheldon. They purchased a heifer in England, a noted prize winner there. The English breeders resented having this fine animal leave their shores and when later the Sheldons had an auction and listed this Durham for sale, the English breeders made up a pool and sent a representative to Geneva to buy her. The American breeders also made a pool and the bidding was fierce. The heifer stayed in America for a price of \$36,500. The English would not go beyond \$36,000.

Later on, when the estate became the property of the late eccentric Charles Bean, the old stable was the "Endymion Academy," a curious educational institution which existed mostly in Bean's fancy. But he sent out catalogs, picturing the churchly nave which he built there and the swimming pool, about which lolled "students" in bathing suits (of the long variety). That swimming pool was only 18 inches deep and served far better as a cock pit than as a bathing pool. Bean had some beautifully embossed diplomas printed. One of them, it is said, gained for a Genevan entrance into a mid-West college. Bean named the "school" Endymion, because of his fondness for the works of the poet Keats.

Bean was a world traveler, an authority on early American history and lore of the Free Masons. Once he owned the desk of William Morgan, foe of Free Masonry, whose abduction plunged the land into political controversy. On the property also is a stone statue dedicated "to the memory of Canon Scott."

On one of his trips abroad, Bean met Sarah Bernhardt and on his farm in Prattsburgh, on the main road to Bath, he erected a curious monument to the Divine Sarah. The farm is mostly cattail swamp and at the edge of a weed-choked dooryard, is the memorial, a pillar of concrete blocks, about six feet square and eight feet tall. A marble plaque on its front holds this inscription in bold letters:

*"To Madame Sarah Bernhardt,*

*The Greatest Actress on Earth whose Lyric Fire and Divine Voice gave more Intense and Supreme Life to the Poets,*

*In profound admiration is built this rugged memorial by the Knights of Cypress and Devoted Friends."*

Who were the Knights of Cypress? Only Charley Bean knew.

At the other end of the farm across a creek, the eccentric Bean built a wooden structure which he called Leigh Hall and which was to be a museum of art and culture, but which never housed anything more artistic or cultural than farm tools.

At the corner of Castle and North Streets is one of the few octagon houses left in this region to remind us of a fad of a century ago, the home of Dr. F. A. Smith.

On South Main Street near Trinity Church is the stately house in which once lived Charles J. Folger, who probably attained greater national fame than any other Genevan. A distinguished lawyer and jurist, he was secretary of the treasury under President Arthur and in 1882 was the Republican candidate for governor of New York. His opponent was a bull-necked earthy man of destiny, the reform mayor of Buffalo, Grover Cleveland. Against such an antagonist and despite the powerful support of President Arthur, Folger went down to defeat.



On Exchange Street one of the few cigar store Indians left in upstate New York brandishes his tomahawk.

And on Castle Street hill at the junction of North Main, stands a stone boulder, Geneva's tribute to a martyred policeman, slain in the line of duty. On a February morning in 1924, Aeneas McDonald, 50-year-old city policeman, joined in a hunt for two yeggs whom another copper had surprised in the act of "blowing" the safe in the New York Central Station. The yeggs opened fire, wounded the policeman and fled. McDonald came on one of them near St. Patrick's Cemetery. He collared the bandit, who emptied his revolver into the policeman's body. McDonald died in a few hours. The bandit was seized on the spot. He turned out to be Howard Keavin, Rochester gangster whose subsequent escapes and exploits kept Western New York in a dither for years.

Geneva had had few crimes of violence. The wanton killing of a popular police officer stirred the city deeply. Hence the stone memorial at a busy intersection. And in the police station in City Hall, the picture of McDonald, shrouded in black crepe, hangs in a glass-framed cabinet on the wall, along with guns and other grim reminders of the tragedy of 1924.

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For a century, Geneva has been a nursery center. Once there were 50 nurseries on her outskirts, where shrubs, fruit trees and berry bushes were grown and shipped all over the country. There are many left, for the soil of the countryside is well adapted for such purposes.

A whole chapter could be devoted to the State Agricultural Experiment Station, on the northwestern rim of the town since 1882. It is affiliated with the State College of Agriculture at Ithaca. Its scientists have performed virtual miracles in the 60 years of the Station's career. Today they are playing a mighty part in this war, on that vital battlefield called food production. Their work in de-



hydration and the development of rubber plants is especially noteworthy. Recently their laboratories have turned their emphasis from dairying to land crops.

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The Station is near the old site of Kanadasega, the castle of the Senecas. Ghosts walk there. There is the shade of Samuel Kirtland, weary after his jaunt on snow shoes over the crusted drifts all the long way from Johnstown. He has come to preach Christianity to the Indians, the first Protestant missionary in the wilds.

One hears again the oratory of Red Jacket in the council house, for the Demosthenes of the Senecas once dwelt at Kanadasega.

Down at the lakeside, Louis Philippe, later a king of France, boards a sloop to sail down Seneca water to French Catharine's Town.

A gangling farm boy works at day labor in the village for awhile, is discharged for dishonesty. He leaves Geneva, "discovers" golden tablets on a hillside and found a mighty church. His name is Joseph Smith.

John James Audubon, the naturalist, strolls in a garden with his old friend and host, Gen. Joseph G. Swift, the first graduate of West Point, and long a resident of Geneva.

For me there were personal memories. As I rode by the State Armory in Main Street, on a bus bound for Penn Yan, in the early morning, grinning Italian prisoners were sweeping off the sidewalks, under guard. Later in the day they would be taken to the fields to help harvest the crops of a countryside that never before had seen prisoners of war.

The old Armory brought back memories to me of a night in April, 1917, when drums rolled and khaki-clad Geneva National Guardsmen marched through the drill hall. In scholarly and eloquent terms, Jacob Gould Schurman, then president of Cornell University, enunciated the aims of America in world conflict. For that day the United States had declared war on Imperial Germany.

As I recalled the high, crusading spirit that fired the hearts of men in that other war-time and reflected on the home front today, I wondered what had happened to America in 26 short years.

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In the lobby of the Hotel Seneca, old Geneva was assembling. The occasion was the annual dinner of the local charities organization. It was a dignified, yet a friendly group. But it stood apart, as if on a beleaguered island, while all about it surged a tide of blue. Blue jackets, white caps, white leggings, gold braid, were all over that hotel lobby.

I talked with one of the native Genevans, an elderly gentleman with a scholarly, benign face. He was a professional man, not wealthy, but of The Hill.

"Look at this," he said, ruefully, pointing out the window. "Our quiet old city is gone."

By "this," he meant the crowds of sailors in the street, bound for the movies, the grills or just wandering around. They were mostly mere boys, with all the gusto and high spirits of youth. They seemed to be well behaved, perhaps because there were so many shore patrolmen on the streets swinging nightsticks.

At any rate, they were American boys wearing the uniform of their country, the uniform that John Paul Jones and David Farragut and Admiral Sampson wore. Those boys were in training to fight our battles for us on the seven seas.

Yes, they have changed Geneva. But what a different change Hitler and Hirohito might have wrought had there been no mighty American Navy to bar their paths of conquest.

And along with some chaos, the huge naval station has brought considerable prosperity to Geneva. Even the old gentleman admitted that.

There are 35,000 men in training at Sampson. During their eight weeks' stay, each gets ten hours' liberty. There also are some 10,000 others at the station, a more or less permanent personnel, besides a horde of civilian employes. Many of the sailors and civilians have brought their families with them to live in Geneva. So the buses that roll in from Sampson at nightfall bring a veritable human avalanche to the city.

Things have calmed down a lot since the hectic construction period at the Seneca Ordnance Depot and at Sampson. That was the most turbulent time the old town has ever known. Legions of workmen from all over the country, many of them Negroes, poured in on an unprepared Geneva. There was no place for them. They slept in the Armory, the City Hall, in parks, in trailers, in autos. Some of them stayed only a short time but others took their places and the flood of invasion seemed endless. At the end of the construction boom the situation became more stabilized. During all that tumultuous era, virtually no major crimes were recorded in Geneva.

The housing lack rapidly is being remedied. The government is remodeling many old homes, among them the one-time mansions of the blue bloods, into multiple apartments. On the edge of town, near Border City, 250 unit houses were being built when I visited Geneva. Fifty of them are for Negro families.

The war hit Geneva with a sudden and violent impact. She has risen valiantly to meet the situation. At heart she is hospitable. She really does not resent the sailor boys who throng once tranquil streets. She has a large and well equipped USO center where the lads from many states are made to feel at home.

But Geneva is old and when one grows old, it is hard to become adjusted to abrupt changes. And no American city ever was challenged to face a swifter transition.



If the whole Navy came to Seneca's shores, Geneva would retain her individuality. As long as the wistaria creeps over white pillars on The Hill and the grape vines twist around backyard arbors in Little Italy, Geneva will be Geneva, sophisticated, urbane, complex.

Above all, she has that intangible quality, which, whether on the athletic field or the racetrack, in the drawing room or in the halls of state, is instantly recognized as *class*.



## The “Lady” of the Lakes

THE little skiff bobbed gently on the waters of Brandy Bay, the blue green waters that held so much fascination for little Harry Morse.

He was only six years old and his mother had taken him along for company that bright summer morning nearly 60 years ago when she went fishing near the old distillery.

The lad dipped a hand in the water. Then he peered down into the depths that were so full of mystery to a six year old. He bent lower and lower over the side of the boat until his face touched the lukewarm water. Intent on her line, the mother did not notice.

Suddenly, the boy jerked back his head, screaming. He grabbed frantically at his nose. Something white and shiny flopped about in the bottom of the boat.

It was a six pound trout. The mother pounced on it.

Thinking the boy's pink and white proboscis some new and delectable tidbit, the fish had snapped at it and hung on. The sudden pain caused the youngster to throw back his head and pull the big trout into the boat—with his nose.

There has been many a notable catch of fish before and since on Lake Keuka but never one exactly like that.

The story spread and pictures were taken of Harry and the fish he had landed with such unusual bait. Those pictures were put on postcards and sold on the excursion boats which plied the lake.

When Harry grew up, he became a pilot on those lake boats. After the steamers quit, he operated a movie house in Penn Yan. He was a shy and modest man and would seldom discuss the piscatorial exploit of his boyhood.

Harry Morse died a few years ago. To his dying day he carried a scar on his nose, to verify the strangest fish story ever told in the land of the slim, blue lakes.

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Of the seven lakes I visited during October's dreariest week, Keuka was the only one the sun shone on.

Sunshine becomes Keuka. Somber skies only accentuate Seneca's wild and mystical grandeur. No whim of the weather gods can shake Canandaigua's regal assurance.

But Keuka exudes the spirit of peace, deep, abiding, heart warming. She is "THE LADY" of the Lakes. She is lovely in any season but most enchanting when the first frosts tint with rich coloring her vine clad slopes; when the smoky haze of autumn hovers over the rugged head of Bluff Point, the promontory that divides Keuka water into two slender arms.

When the great glacial blanket was lifted from this land after it had dammed the primitive rivers and transformed them into lakes, it left a Y shaped sheet of water and 60 miles of curving shoreline, dotted with bays and coves, in the southern York State hills.

The Indians called the shining, two-pronged lake Keuka, "canoe landing." The white pioneers named it Crooked Lake. In later years, it resumed its older and more picturesque title.

Keuka is the only Finger Lake of irregular outline. Its waters course from the main inlet at the base of the Y in one of its branches and flow out around a dividing bluff to its outlet at the tip of the other fork, a phenomenon of Mother Nature.



A Rochester poetress, who has spent many summers beside Keuka, has not only caught the spirit of the lake, but also epitomized its story in this verse:

*"Lake of wind silvered willows, of bright wind troubled waters,  
Not for naught did the Indians name you Keuka,  
Canoe landing.*

*Where once the war canoes glided down these narrow valleys,  
On this Indian lake, white men first tried the hydroplane,  
Giant bird settling down on these waves like the wild duck,  
Like the gray sea gull.*

*Waters not sung by poet or mapped by historian,  
You are patterned with shadows human living has made,  
Subtly shaded with hope and tragedy out of the past."*

This ode to "Keuka" is contained in a thin volume of charming verse titled "Fragile Armor," from the pen of Frances Angevine Gray.

The winds that silver the willows and trouble the bright waters of the Crooked Lake are in the main soft, caressing ones. Wafted down from the sloping hills where the blue grapes ripen in the sunshine, they murmur of an olden time.

They tell of the canoes that once knifed the divided waters when Keuka was the Senecas' fishing paradise, just as later it became the white man's. The Indians built no populous villages along its shores and therefore Sullivan's invaders bypassed it. So for the first time in my swing around the lakes, my trail did not cross that of the Buff and Blue army of 1779.

The little winds murmur, too, of the Indian boy who practised oratory in the woods near his mother's cabin at the foot of the lake's western arm, with only the birds and squirrels as his audience. His name was Otetiani (Always Ready). Later on, he was known only as Red Jacket, the silver tongued chief in the scarlet British coat.

They whisper of the strange, forceful woman who called herself the Universal Friend and whose fanatical cult, built, near the Crooked Lake, the first white colony in the whole Genesee Country.

They tell of the country lad in whose brain burned a prophetic vision and in whose hands lay mechanical genius, who loosed the first "giant bird" on Keuka waves and who became revered as the father of naval aviation. But the stories of Jemima Wilkinson, and Glenn Hammond Curtis will be told in later chapters. This is to be the story of the Crooked Lake itself.

That chapter must include the colorful era when there were six steamboats on the lake, when the long excursion trains rolled in, the heyday of Grove Springs and Ogoyago and Idlewild and the other popular spots along the lake.

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In pioneer times, when the highways were only rutted trails and before the whistle of the Iron Horse pierced the stillness of the frontier, the natural waterways were the bulwarks of commerce.

Early in the 19th Century, an enterprising trader, George McClure of Bath, launched the schooner Sally on the Crooked Lake. This and other craft transported the settlers' grain and other produce over the lake to Hammondsport at its southern tip. Thence it was hauled by team the 10 miles to Bath and shipped by raft and ark down the Conhocton to the Susquehanna and the great ports of Philadelphia and Baltimore.

The building of the Erie Canal diverted this traffic to northern ports. The outlet of Keuka, the narrow, shallow Minnesetah River, flows into Seneca Lake. But it was inadequate for the commerce of this growing new land. So in 1833 the Crooked Lake Canal was built between Penn Yan, at the foot of Keuka Lake, to Dresden, seven miles distant, on Seneca Lake.

Heavily laden canal boats were towed by steamer from Hammondsport and other landings down the lake to the canal junction in Penn Yan where they were hauled by horses and mules to Dres-



den over the Crooked Lake Canal. That waterway gave up the ghost in 1870 but the remains of its 28 lift locks and old towpath may still be seen. The Fall Brook branch of the New York Central follows pretty much the old canal bed.

From 1818 on, for thirty years, ferries plied the Crooked Lake. Two of them were operated by Hiram Gleason. One was a 12-passenger rowboat, equipped with four oars. The other was a big flat bottomed craft with side wheels, propelled by a horse treadmill on either side of the lake. A sail aided the horses when the wind was favorable. The coming of the steamboats made them obsolete.

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The Steamboat Age dawned on Keuka Lake in 1837 with the advent of the 80-foot, wood-burning Keuka, which was propelled by a central paddle wheel midway between its two hulls. Its principal task was to tow the canal boats. After it stranded in the mud in 1848, it was dismantled.

Then came the Steuben, a side wheeler, built in 1845, and operated by Capt. John Gregg. The Steuben burned at the dock in Penn Yan in 1864. Third steamer on the lake was the George R. Youngs, 130 feet long and proud of its dining room, launched in 1864. Rechristened the Steuben, it was beached in 1879.

In 1867 Capt. Allen Wood's Keuka, a screw steamer, appeared, followed by the 115-foot-side wheeler Yates which ploughed Keuka water from 1872 to 1883, when she went up in flames, the fate of so many of the lake boats.

In the 1870's the development of the grape industry brought a new prosperity to the Keuka region. Acres of vineyards covered the countryside. Massive stone wineries were cut into the hillsides. Lake Keuka grapes and wines became world famous. Steamboats were needed to haul them from the ports along the lake and in 1878, a new sidewheeler, the Lulu, made her maiden voyage down the 21 miles of lake. Her four-letter name was painted in big, bold letters



on her white hull. She was fitted out with a former locomotive engine. It was said the roar of her exhaust could be heard ten miles on a still day.

The Lulu was joined in 1880 by the Urbana. Both were the property of Capt. Wood, who also operated the narrow gauge railroad from Bath to Hammondsport and was the founder of the Lake Keuka Navigation Company. The Urbana was noted for her graceful lines and for the deer painted on her walking beam. Her engine once graced a Hudson River steamer. She operated until 1904 and figured prominently in the fierce navigation war that raged in the 1880's and '90s.

Around 1882, a Rochester lawyer and investor, William L. Halsey, had a summer home "Carenaught," a mile from Grove Springs, on the lakefront. One day he and his wife were on the Urbana, out of Penn Yan. Because the lake was rough, the skipper refused to land the Halseys at their dock and instead, took them to Grove Springs. The lawyer was incensed and told the Urbana captain that "if you can't operate this boat to accommodate the public, I will build one of my own that will."

It was no idle threat. Halsey interested Rochester and Penn Yan capital in the new Crooked Lake Navigation Company. In 1883 the fastest, largest steamboat the lake ever saw, slid down the ways. It was the Farley Holmes. Immediately a long and bitter steamboat war began. The new line cut the fare to "ten cents to any point on the lake." The other company followed suit. Previously the fare from Bath to Hammondsport had been \$1.

On its maiden voyage, the Holmes, about to pull into the docks at Penn Yan, found its path blocked by the Urbana, squarely across the channel. The law was invoked before the Urbana yielded ground.

The Holmes and the Urbana staged spirited races. The Crooked Lake line did not operate on the Sabbath. The older company did. Hence the new line got most of the church excursion

trade. But both advertised extensively and the fame of Keuka, its low excursion rates, its good fishing, its natural charm, spread. More and more excursion trains rumbled into Hammondsport and Penn Yan, on week days, as well as Sundays, from Rochester, Buffalo, Elmira, Binghamton, Corning. The wine cellars were a popular drawing card. For years the Rochester Chamber of Commerce opened its season with an excursion to Keuka Lake. The shore became lined with summer cottages. Prodigious catches of fish, largely trout, were reported—including a 24 pounder.

In 1887 the Crooked Lake interests built a new boat, faster than the Holmes. It was named the William L. Halsey. The line added the West Branch, a screw steamer, to the fleet. This boat operated only over the western fork of the lake, from Branchport to Gibson's Landing and Penn Yan.

In 1891 both companies tired of the profitless competition and joined forces, with the Crooked Lake line disposing of its interests to its rival.

Then in 1892, the pride of the lake, the all steel screw steamer, the Mary Bell, which cost \$40,000 and had a 600-passenger capacity, made her debut. She was named after the wife of C. W. Drake, principal stockholder in the reorganized navigation concern.

The very name, Mary Bell, is likely to stir memories among graybeards. She carried uncounted thousands on excursion trips around the lake in her 30 years reign over Keuka waters.

But rivalry did not end with the merger. A small but determined new competitor, the 85-foot Cricket, challenged the established line until it burned to the water's edge in 1908.

The Lake Keuka company came into the hands of the Erie Railroad, along with the B and H rail line. The Holmes was renamed the Yates and finally was abandoned in 1915. The Halsey became the Steuben and sank off Hammondsport in 1917. The West Branch vanished from the scene. Finally there was only the Mary Bell, under a new name, the Penn Yan.



She carried on bravely in a changing world. Paved roads and the automobile had come to humble the steamboats. The dark days of World War I kept the Penn Yan idly swinging at her dock in Hammondsport.

There she stayed for three seasons until John S. Neill took her over. She was cut down and gasoline engines were installed. Early pictures show a big cabin behind her wheelhouse. This was reserved for Erie Railroad moguls and other dignitaries. As John Neill, now a Rochester fruit and vegetable broker, put it the other day, "the old boat stopped too much wind." So her luxury cabin had to go in the streamlining process.

When the Penn Yan was recommissioned, state steamboat inspectors came from Albany to pass on her. There are a lot of wine cellars in the region. Be that as it may, something apparently confused the inspectors, for they sent back a certificate for a boat "of all wooden construction." As the steamer was all steel, Neill sent the document back for correction.

But he and the once proud lake queen were fighting a losing battle against a new order. In the late summer of 1922, the old boat made her last trip with passengers. The rest of that season she carried grapes and plenty of them—for that fall 22,500,000 pounds were shipped from Hammondsort.

When Capt. W. H. Puffer steered the Penn Yan, nee the Mary Bell, into her docks at the head of the Crooked Lake in the twilight of a fall day in 1922, he was writing finis to a picturesque chapter in Finger Lakes history. Eighty-five years of steamboating on Keuka had ended. The last of the steamboats swung at anchor, idle, forlorn, stripped of her machinery and brass, disintegrating, little by little, as the years went by, until at last she became a part of the waters she once had ruled.

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Keuka Lake is lined with cottages, has been for half a century. Many of them are elaborate summer homes. There are inns and



dancing places and sylvan retreats, as well as a lovely college campus, along her shores. Yachts and motor boats skim over the waters the steamboats once threshed.

But something has gone from the Crooked Lake—and from America. The Steamboat Age was a warm and happy hour that will never come again. Green in the memories of an older generation are the Mary Bell and the Urbana and the other pleasure craft that bore them on excursions in halcyon days of yore.

Moonlight shining on a stretch of summer lake brings back memories of Lake Keuka in its heyday—of Grove Springs and its big hotel with the pillared porches and dancing pavilion; of old Ogoyago in the woods on the western shore; of Idlewild, of Keuka, swarming with salmon trout; of the Ark; of Gibson's Landing, of Tanglewood, of Urbana, where the ivy still creeps over the old stone winery just as it did when dad and mother were young and went to the Crooked Lake on Sunday excursions.

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John Neill loaned me a booklet, put out in 1891 by the navigation-railroad company, telling of the glories of Lake Keuka.

It contained an endorsement of "Keuka as a fishing resort," from none other than Seth Green, the greatest angler of his day. Under date of April 8, 1881, Green, then U. S. Fish Commissioner, wrote from Rochester that:

"I think Lake Keuka unsurpassed by any waters in America as a fishing resort—on Aug. 28 last I took, with hook and line, 19 salmon trout, weighing 113 pounds, and on Oct. 1, 1880, 33 black bass, weighing 106 pounds."

Green often fished Keuka Lake and made his headquarters at Jim Benton's, now Hotel Keuka. There he developed the Seth Green rig, 300 feet long, with six leaders to which were attached three treble gang hooks. Game protectors were not so fussy in those days.

Seth Green demonstrated that hungry fish will bite anything shiny by attaching a piece of wall chain to his line and landing a sizeable trout.

But even that wizard of rod and line never caught a six-pound trout with his nose!

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In the old days there were more methods of transportation than there are today. But it can't be said they were as speedy as the buses and private automobiles that dash around Lake Keuka today and provide about the only means of transit.

Back in 1900, so I was told, a young woman who lived in Bath set out one winter's day at the crack of dawn to visit her sister in Penn Yan, 31 miles away. Here is the log of her journey, in its four stages:

1. By railroad train from Bath to Hammondsport.
2. By steamboat from Hammondsport to Gibson's Landing where the vessel became stuck fast in the ice.
3. By horse-drawn sleigh from Gibson's to Branchport.
4. By interurban trolley (yes, there was one once along Keuka's shores) from Branchport to Penn Yan.

P. S.—She reached her destination late at night.

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Keuka's temperament is naturally serene and genial. But she has her moods. It is recorded that spring thaws sometimes raised the level of the lake so that saw horses were placed, with planks laid across them, at the Keuka Hotel docks, that passengers might board the steam boats.

On the other hand, the lake is so shallow in spots that the old boats had difficulty in making some of her docks. She has some treacherous "step offs."

And sometimes sudden storms rumple the usually tranquil waters and fierce gusts come rushing down over Bluff Point to send yachts and rowboats scurrying to cover.

Those tantrums are rare, but about one of them has been woven a legend of the past, when the Lakes Country was the realm of the Red Men.

Once many years ago in the moon of the strawberry harvest, a young Seneca brave was crossing the lake in a canoe with his wife and young child. A sudden tempest smote the waters, capsizing the canoe. The woman and child sank from sight before the brave could rescue them. He swam ashore. The storm passed as quickly as it came. The lake calmed but there was no sign of woman or child.

Then an empty canoe drifted in with the wind. On shore a heartbroken Indian shook his fist at the lake and pronounced this curse:

"Today you have seemed to smile. Your eyes laughed when my child and my wife dipped their fingers in your waters. You seemed to join us in thanking the Great Spirit that summer had come and that the ice on your back had melted.

"But you lied. You are a snake. You have taken my family. Therefore I curse you always to be hungry when the fifth moon is in the sky. You will catch and drown helpless woman and children, for you will be hungry for them.

"I curse you to be unable to eat them. They will come to the top of the water and the wind will blow them to shore. I curse you always to be hungry when the fifth moon glows in the sky and the strawberries are ripe in the dark woods."

To this day, when early summer squalls bring tragedy to Keuka Lake, it is said that the bodies of the victims always drift into shore.





## PENNSylvania YANkees

THE last rafter had been nailed fast. The frame of the new barn stood, gaunt and aromatic of freshly cut pine, against a background of green woods.

Philemon Baldwin, lithe and determined of mien, sprang up a ladder and mounted to the ridgepole. He looked down upon a little circle of tanned, upturned faces, for the whole community had turned out for the barn raising. He spoke and his voice rang out, clear and strong.

"Men, don't you think it is time we ceased this senseless bickering over the name of this settlement? Unofficially it is called Unionville but you don't relish the name. Heaven knows there is little unity here. You men from Pennsylvania want recognition for your home state. You Yankees want a name that will remind you of New England. So you have wrangled and stirred up such a fuss that our neighbors laugh at us and call this place Pandemonium.

"This squabbling is holding back our growth. I propose to end it with a name for this town that should satisfy everyone. Gentlemen, let us call this future city on the shores of the Crooked Lake, PENN YAN—Penn for the PENNSylvanians among us and Yan for the YANkees!"

There was a moment of silence as the settlers thought over the compromise. Then a roar of approval arose.

And that is how, way back in 1810, the comely village at the foot of Keuka Lake got its unusual name.

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Pandemonium could not last long, even in early Penn Yan. Chaos and dissension are foreign to her nature. She believes in order and industry and lets no extraneous trivialities interfere with the even march of her progress—always down the middle path.

Her setting is picturesque. Mighty hills hem her in on three sides. On her southern border stretches the long eastern arm of lovely Lake Keuka.

The village has had her hours of drama. She has her traditions. She is linked forever to the fantastic story of Jemima Wilkinson, high priestess of a long extinct cult that founded the first white settlement in all the Genesee Country.

Indian legends, lore of the old canal and the old steamboats, the heyday of the grape industry, they are all woven into her tapestry of tradition.

But Penn Yan is too busy making and selling useful things to waste much time ruminating over phantoms of the past or chasing will-of-the-wisps of the future. Penn Yan is practical, solid, efficient. She is kindly and hospitable, too; a mighty comfortable sort of town under her canopy of spreading old trees.

This village of some 5,300 souls is a trading center for 35,000 dwellers in one of the richest farm and fruit belts in the East. In frontier days she loomed large on the commercial horizon as a canal and lake port. Later, as a center of the grape and wine industry, she became an important railroad shipping point.

But Penn Yan never has depended upon any one industry. She adapted her economy to changing times. Today she has 12 diversified industries, all geared to the demands of a nation at war. Her Main Street is no deserted village lane. It is a busy market-place. She is prosperous through no accident of geography or birth but because of the vigor and the enterprise of her people.



Her innate conservatism is a heritage from her Pennsylvania-Yankee founders. It is offset by a briskness and virility that savors of the Middle West. In many ways, prudent yet progressive Penn Yan—a good town to live in—is a miniature Rochester.

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Penn Yan's first residents were the very first settlers in the Lakes Country—before the curtain was lifted on recorded history. For on the village site have been unearthed remains of a prehistoric people, mound building Algonkians, or Eskimos, definitely pre-Seneca.

To Shays' Bay State Rebellion, Penn Yan owes her first white resident. In 1787 the debt-ridden farmers of Massachusetts rose against the rulers of the state. When the revolt failed, one of its leaders, Jacob Fredenburg, fled into the wilds and found refuge with the Indians who lived on the present site of Penn Yan. He built a log hut beside Jacob's Brook and was adopted into the tribe.

Settlement dates back to 1791 when George Wheeler and others acquired a tract around the foot of the lake. But the village's real growth stems from the advent of David Wagener, a follower of Jemima Wilkinson. He came from Montgomery County in 1791, after buying an interest in the Friends' Mill, the first business venture of the Jemimakins. Five years later Wagener purchased land at the present Penn Yan. He erected the first grist mill in the village, south of the Keuka outlet. His sons, Abraham and Melchior, joined him, and Abraham is revered as the real father of the village.

He built the first frame house and the first inn, the Mansion House, on the site of the present Knapp Hotel. In the orchard in its rear he developed the famous Wagener apple. He gave Court House Square to the community. In 1830 he built the stone manor house that dominates Bluff Point, the headland that cleaves the waters of the Crooked Lake.

Traffic on the lake and on the Crooked Lake Canal, which linked Keuka and Seneca lakes, brought early prosperity to the vil-



lage Flour mills and saw mills sprang up. There were many distilleries although the Penn Yan folk always were "moderate" people. One of the early distillery owners even named his daughter "Temperance."

At first, the business section was at the head of Main Street but swung inevitably to its present location nearer the waterways.

The first post office was a covered hole in a tree where, prior to 1801, Daniel Brown left the mail he had brought on horseback from Canandaigua.

Penn Yan has been the shire town of Yates since the inception of that county in 1824. The red brick county buildings have a deceptive appearance of antiquity. In reality the jail is only 40 years old. It is on the site of the lockup that was burned down in 1857 by a prisoner awaiting trial—for arson. The white columned County Building in the shady park is a busy place when courts are in session. It was erected in 1889.

In Court House Square a barren concrete platform tells how a World War I trophy cannon was sacrificed to the scrap drive. Penn Yan has a keen civic consciousness and gives liberally to worthy causes. Again characteristically, her municipal power plant for years has been virtually self supporting.

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The Iron Horse came to Keuka's shores in 1850, when ground was broken for the Canandaigua & Corning Railroad, now part of the Northern Central branch of the Pennsylvania. The next year saw 1,000 sweating men laying tracks from Penn Yan to Jefferson, (now Watkins Glen). "Old 94" made the first run over the 46 miles to Jefferson in two hours, an amazing record in those days.

With the development of the vineyard industry, Hammondsport and Penn Yan, at opposite ends of the lake, vied as America's greatest grape shipping centers. In the 1890s 25,000 acres of vineyards sprawled over the hills and vales adjoining the Crooked Lake.

Those were the days when the Grape Specials steamed out of

Penn Yan, sometimes eight or 10 a day, over the Northern Central and the Fall Brook lines. They were laden with tons of the fruit, packed in five and 10-pound baskets. Most of them came down the lake in the steamboats that plied the placid waters. An immense cold storage warehouse arose beside the docks.

The label, "Keuka," on a basket of grapes was a brand of super excellence in the markets of the nation. Gardner B. Ellis, veteran Rochester newspaperman, a young printer in Penn Yan in those days, remembers running off thousands of those labels on an old-fashioned foot press. The color of the labels was predominantly red and sometimes the old printing office seemed to be dripping with gore.

The Grape Specials no longer pull out of Penn Yan. The steamboats' whistles have long been hushed. Keuka grapes are mostly made into wines, and Hammondsport, with its great wineries, is the real capital of the Grape Belt now.

But Penn Yan has a healthy diversity of other industries. Her eggs are not all in one basket. Some of them are in a basket factory. There are canneries, two wineries, a clothing factory, and plants that in peace-time made truck bodies, boats and many other articles. The Barden and Robinson factory, on the same site for half a century, was the only pre-war manufacturer of hand woven bassinets in the East. Now in war-time the plant that produced baby baskets is making ammunition crates for the Seneca Ordnance Depot. Basket weaving is an art handed down from generation to generation. One of the Barden workers is the third in his line to weave baskets there. The Birkett Mills, on the pioneer Wagener mill site, is the largest maker of buckwheat products in the world.

In bygone years the lakefront was a busy place, in winter as well as in summer, for the ice harvest furnished employment to hundreds. The rasp of the saw cutting through the thick ice lingered longer on Keuka than on the other lakes, just as did the whistle of the steamers. The Crooked Lake yielded slowly, reluctantly to a new



order. The vast, time-stained ice house at the foot of the lake, has been converted into a labyrinth of lockers where thrifty Yates County folk may store their meat in these days of rationing and scarcity.

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On every side are visible links with the past—the Main Street bridge where once stood the main lock that controlled navigation on the old canal—the channel where the steamboats in docking made their difficult turning maneuvers—the Benham Hotel which perpetuates the name of Miles Benham who kept a tavern in the town a century and a quarter ago—the fair grounds near the lake where the first plowing match was held in 1840 and where, despite the war-time restrictions that have closed so many of its neighbors, a county fair was held in 1943.

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When I was in Penn Yan last October, gaily painted circus wagons enlivened the drabness of the deserted fair grounds. They bore the name “James M. Cole Circus.”

Tall, blond Jimmy Cole is probably Penn Yan’s most colorful present-day citizen. When he was only seven, he had his picture taken with a circus Indian on a bale of hay. Ever since, the circus has been in his blood. As a lad he peddled handbills and shifted scenery for every show that came to the old Sampson Opera House.

Then he joined the Big Top and traveled with the Walter L. Main, Gentry and Hagenback circuses, usually as a ticket seller. He learned a lot about the show business. Always before him paraded his dream of having his own show.

In 1936 that dream came true, but briefly. The James M. Cole Circus opened with fanfare in Detroit. It went on to Cleveland. There it folded. Jimmy Cole had plenty of courage, he knew the circus ropes, but his financing was inadequate for so stupendous an enterprise. So he came back to Penn Yan, to become a night clerk in the Benham Hotel, but never to lose sight of his dream.



And he succeeded on a smaller scale. He bought Jumbo, the 8,500 pound elephant, a star of the Billy Rose show at the New York World's Fair; an assortment of trick ponies, dogs and monkeys, and in the winter of 1941 played high school gymnasiums in the neighborhood with his indoor circus. In 1942 he went on the road again with his own show, hitting only the smaller towns.

But last year, the long arm of Selective Service reached out to call the impresario to a part in a mightier and a sterner show. He was given six months to dispose of his equipment and wind up his affairs. In December James M. Cole, 37, owner of a circus, became just another soldier in the Army of the United States. The red wheels of his circus wagons roll no more. But after the war guns cease booming, it is a safe bet that Jimmy Cole will be back on the road again—with his own show.

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Until recent years, whenever there was a parade in Penn Yan, a curious old carriage, with a crescent shaped body, had a place of honor. Once it was a proud equipage. The tapestry, now rotting away, was the color of burnished gold. On its back panels can still be discerned the engraved letters "UF."

They stood for Universal Friend. It was in this coach that Jemima Wilkinson, the woman who rose from the dead, rode all the long way from Philadelphia to her New Jerusalem in the Lakes Country. That was in 1790. Two years before her scouts had prepared a place for her in "the Vale of Kedron."

No frontier ever knew a stranger character than The Friend. The daughter of an humble Rhode Island family arose from a seizure of brain fever to announce that she had died, that her carnal existence had ended, that her body had been reanimated by the Divine Spirit and that she had returned to earth, neither man or woman, but the Publick Universal Friend, to save sinners from the eternal wrath.

She had a magnetic way with her and the fire of a crusading evangelist. And she had business acumen. She drew followers from all over New England, some of them rich and prominent. They desired a colony of their own, in some remote spot, where the holy Jemima could rule her subjects, unmolested. They first chose a site near Dresden. Nearby they built the first mill and harvested the first wheat ever sown west of Seneca Lake.

The settlement thrived and added to its holdings. In 1809 the Friends moved to a new site, on a high hill near Branchport, on the Shearman Hollow Road, within sight of the bright waters of the Crooked Lake. There she built the staunch, three-story, New Englandish, white clapboard house of hand hewn timbers and with nine fireplaces, that stands today and is widely known as the Friend's House.

She ruled with an iron hand. She forbade her followers to marry, but many of them disobeyed. She controlled all the finances of her cult. She made friends with the Indians. She preached a simple doctrine, in effect, that if you were good, you went to heaven; if you sinned and did not repent, you burned in hellfire.

The prophetess died or as she phrased it "left time," in 1819. Without its forceful leader, the sect swiftly disintegrated. There are many descendants of the Jemimakins left in the neighborhood. They are thrifty, substantial people.

The Friends' House is just an ordinary farmhouse today, occupied by an ordinary family. Near her first settlement is the old City Hill Cemetery of the sect. None of the graves is marked. Only two persons know where the Universal Friend is buried. It is a secret passed down through the generations to the chosen ones.

In the Penn Yan Library is a well worn saddle of fine leather, trimmed with silver. There also are a whip, frayed as if with much use, and a straight backed, old fashioned chair. They are carefully preserved for once they belonged to The Friend.



The old coach for years reposed in a Penn Yan barn. Probably it will see no more parades. Jemima's carriage recently was presented by Miss Velma Remer, its last owner, to the Historical Museum at Canandaigua.

The square house on the hill, the coach, the old gravestones, a few relics—and the portrait of Jemima, in Arnold Potter's home, that few are allowed to see—they are the only material objects that remain to tell of the most remarkable woman ever to live in the land of the lakes.

But the spirit of Jemima Wilkinson seems still to hover over that countryside. A striking figure rides again in fancy over the rutted trails, a woman, costumed like both man and woman, with flashing dark eyes and raven ringlets that hang down over a white scarf, knotted around a strong neck. She is a commanding figure in her queer beaver hat, this woman, who, some historians claim, could neither read nor write, yet had qualities of leadership that drew hundreds to her side—until she "left time" and failed to arise from the dead, as she had done before when a girl in Rhode Island.

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Near the Friends' first colony, where the state road from Penn Yan to Dresden meets the lake road to Geneva, is a Lost City.

Charles Williamson, land agent extraordinary, laid it out more than 140 years ago, with a public square and orderly streets. He named it Hopeton after a nobleman in his native Scotland. It never fulfilled his expectations. Dresden on Seneca Lake overshadowed and eventually absorbed it.

Hopeton exists today only in old histories. Sharing its fate are the once great Hopeton Mills that John Nicholas of the White Springs Farm at Geneva built in 1811 in the gorge of the Keuka Lake outlet. They went up in flames in 1827 and there is nothing left to tell of their day of glory.

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Between Penn Yan and Canandaigua in a pretty valley lies Rushville, birthplace of one of the Lakes Country's most famous sons. He was Dr. Marcus Whitman, the martyred missionary and pioneer who blazed the first wagon trail over the Rockies and saved the Oregon Territory to the Union. His wife, Narcissa Prentiss, was born in Prattsburgh, west of Lake Keuka, and in that Steuben County village was made the cumbersome old wagon which bore the Whitmans to the wild West. They saved Oregon but they lost their own lives—in Indian massacre.

On Keuka's western arm in the shadow of a hill is a pillored structure that was once a mansion and part of an estate called Esperanza. Now it is the Yates County Home. In other days a less compassionate people called such places the "Poor House." Yates County spent considerable money remodeling Esperanza, which means "hope" in the Spanish, into a haven for its indigent citizens.

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Like a giant mastiff, Bluff Point watches over the waters of the lake it splits into two blue arms.

From that headland one can see, it is said, seven counties and a dozen lakes on a clear day. That gorgeous panorama of earth and lake and sky caught the fancy of the aborigines, for mound building Indians left a great embankment there.

Charles Williamson thrilled to its beauty, too. On Bluff Point, he built one of his three mansions in the hinterland.

There is the historic Wagener Manor House on its peak and the more modern Garrett mansion on its slope.

But Bluff Point's crowning glory is the exquisite chapel of Gothic stone on its pinnacle. It is a parents' memorial to a beloved son cut down in the flower of his youth.

His name was Charles William Garrett and he was a wine magnate's son. In his 20s, he was stricken with tuberculosis and all Paul Garrett's money could not stave off the inroads of that disease.

The dying youth begged to be taken back to Bluff Point, back to the tranquil, vine-clad country where he had spent so many happy summers.

A year after his death, the Garrett Memorial Chapel on the height was consecrated, on July 12, 1931, and deeded to the Episcopal Church. But it is commonly known as "The Little Chapel on the Mount."

Every detail of this shrine is symbolic. On its ridge is a weather vane in the form of a ship of adventure, its sails loosed to the lake winds. Each chapel window depicts an incident in the life of Christ. On the silver bronze door of the crypt are symbolized the varied activities of man. Familiar poems, known to youth, are represented on the stained windows of the crypt.

The shrine has not always been accorded the respect its character demands. Visitors, munching hot dogs, have arrived in dripping bathing suits; they have parked their cars on the beautifully landscaped grounds. Worse, souvenir hunters and vandals have left their trademarks of desecration.

It has been necessary to take restrictive measure to protect the sanctity of this shrine.

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Few college have so picturesque a campus as Keuka College, four miles west of Penn Yan and fronting the lake for half a mile. Its 600 acres, including a farm and a wooded game sanctuary, extend up vine-clad slopes. Surrounding the campus is Keuka Park, a pleasant community where live many members of the faculty.

Keuka College was born of the energy and determination of a Freewill Baptist minister, the Rev. George H. Ball. In 1887 he conceived the idea of a university in Western New York "for the Christian education of young people of both sexes." He prospected Keuka Lake by boat, looking for a suitable site. He found it but still he lacked the needed funds. He raised \$50,000, almost single handed.

Built from bricks, made on the premises, the first building went up, the oblong, four-story structure known today as Ball Memorial Hall. First called Keuka Institute, the school received a provisional charter in 1892, with Dr. Ball as its first president. In an old booklet of the 1890s, boosting the Keuka section, appears an article about the then new college:

“A thorough college, a great summer assembly, a college settlement where families may reside while their children are in school; positive religious surroundings without sectarian bias; delightful scenery; plainness and cheapness of living; freedom from saloon temptations; attaching families to the school by sale of lots in the Park; thousands interested in the college through the summer assemblies in the immense grove—these are some of the ideals incorporated in this enterprise.—Faith, work and benevolences will complete what has been so hopefully begun.”

The article was signed “a member of the faculty.” One suspects the author may have been the Rev. George H. Ball.

It appeared that faith and work were not enough. The benevolences were too few. The activities of the school had to be suspended in 1915. They were resumed in 1921 when Keuka was opened as a college for women under the auspices of the Northern Baptist Convention.

Since then, the skies have been brighter over Keuka, New and stately buildings have been added through the gifts of laymen. Assets have increased; enrollment is usually up to capacity; scholastic rating is excellent. The school draws students from far places as well as from the countryside. Keuka's Indian collection is regarded as one of the finest in the land. The work of the school has attracted eminent Americans, among them Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who several times in recent years has visited it. Summer religious conferences are still held no longer in ‘the immense grove’ but in the Ball Memorial Chapel.



Keuka, on her sylvan, lake-washed campus, has an air of wholesome and refreshing simplicity in a chaotic and complex world. Crusader Ball is dead but his dream has come true in many ways.

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While I was waiting on a Penn Yan corner for a bus to Hammondsport, a soldier passed by. He was the most untidy soldier I have ever seen. He wore unorthodox leggings, with laces dangling. His coat was unpressed and unbuttoned. His overseas cap looked like a paper sack somebody had walked upon. He was unshaven. His "military carriage" was a shamble. Maybe he was on furlough and was celebrating his freedom in an excess of sartorial disarray. Maybe he had been discharged. Maybe he did not care.

The slovenly soldier caught the eye of another man standing there on the corner. He was a squarely built, fiftiesh man with a weather-beaten neck. He looked at the unsoldierly figure in khaki and grinned:

"Sloppiest soldier I ever saw," he said. There was a trace of some foreign accent in his voice.

I agreed, remarking that most of the boys in the service today were spruce and natty, "far more so than we had been in World War I."

The man said: "I was a soldier once. I fought the Japs. They are tough eggs."

When I asked him where, he replied:

"At Mukden in 1905 I was in the Russian army. Now I have a farm near Stanley."

Just then the bus pulled in and I never did find out the name of the man who had served in the army of the Czar and had fought the "tough eggs" at Mukden.

Mukden and 1905—a far cry in space and time from this upstate village basking in the sunlight of an October afternoon in 1943.

Mukden, the ancient, walled city of the Manchu dynasty, where the last battle of the Russo-Japanese War was waged, up to that time the greatest clash of armed forces in world history. This man, now a Finger Lakes farmer, must have been young then. He had been part of that great army that Kuropatkin drew up, fanwise, before the city to meet the advancing Japs under Nogo. The little men of the island kingdom outmaneuvered and overcame the Russians. This man must have fled with the rest of the Czar's army when the yellow tide poured into the Manchurian city. It meant the end of the war and thereafter the Rising Sun shone brightly in the firmament of the world powers.

Mukden and a street corner in Penn Yan in 1943. Thirty-eight years—and the little yellow men on the warpath again. And a one-time soldier of the Czar who had fought the “tough eggs” in 1905, was raising cabbages in the York State hills.

A small world, saith the old bromide—but it is One World.

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Penn Yan is no cradle of frontier history as is Canandaigua, clothed in the grandeur of a bygone day.

It lacks the aristocratic tradition that makes Geneva so distinctive.

It is no famed tourist mecca like Watkins Glen.

It does not have the Old World-like charm of Hammondsport, the Wine Capital, with its memories of Glenn Curtiss and the great days when the eyes of the world were upon the hill-girt village.

Penn Yan has a reassuring air of substance, of rock-like strength. You feel somehow that this old town would prove a mighty snug harbor when the tempests came.

And of all the communities in the Lakes Country, probably it would be picked as the typical American town.

# Wings Over Vineyards



A STRANGER, driving along the Bath - Hammondsport road a few months ago, said to his companion, a native of the region:

"My, this is a pleasant valley. What is its name?"

"Pleasant Valley," was the reply.

The pioneers first gave it that name 150 years ago. For there the grass seemed to be greener, the skies bluer than anywhere else in this raw, young land. And the steep, high slopes around the southern waters of the Crooked Lake seemed to catch more than their share of sunshine.

This lovely basin scooped out of the hills has had several names.

One of them was Cold Spring Valley, because of the icy water that flowed eternally there.

The village that grew up at the head of the lake and of the valley has for more than a century borne the name of Hammondsport, after an early settler, Lazarus Hammond.

After men had planted vines on the sunny hillsides and found that the grapes that grew there were the sweetest in the land and made the finest wines, the place came to be known as the Grape Bowl of the East.



When soon after the dawn of a new century, strange, bird-like contraptions began to flutter over the valley and the lake, it got another name—the Cradle of Aviation.

That was because a native son, with a mind that raced years ahead of his time and hands that performed mechanical magic, lived and worked there. His name was Glenn Hammond Curtiss and he was the pioneer of pioneers of the skyways.

Through him, this little out-of-the-way village in the Steuben County hills became known all over the world and famous feet beat a path to the door of the Curtiss workshop.

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Hammondsport has a dual personality. Because of the lavishness of nature and the enterprise of growers and vintners, she is the Grape Bowl. Because of the genius of one of her sons, she is the Cradle of Aviation. As Bowl or Cradle, she is equally intriguing.

Village Druggist James H. Smellie, debonair, articulate and a fine figure of a man, summed up his native village, sagely and succinctly:

“This is no ordinary, provincial town although it may seem sleepy. This is the biggest little town in the state. You see, we’ve had the wineries and we’ve had Curtiss. We have seen some mighty important events and some pretty big people here. Hammondsport may not impress strangers. On the other hand, few strangers can impress Hammondsport.”

One senses a distinguished air about the old village, despite its seeming somnolence and its smallish population, a little over 1,100. A rich mantle of tradition hangs over Glenn Curtiss’ home town. It has a cosmopolitan touch that is a reminiscence of its great days.

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It has been said that aviation owes more to Hammondsport than to any other single place and more to Curtiss than any other individual. That seems a sweeping statement but here are some facts to justify it:

The first public flight in America was made there.

Curtiss brought to America the first International Speed Trophy. Keuka Lake is the birthplace of naval aviation.

As a result of water flying experiments on Lake Keuka, Curtiss planes made the first hops from ship to shore and vice versa—heralding the mighty aircraft carriers of today.

Curtiss established at Hammondsport the first flying school in America. He organized the first flying circus. He developed the hydro-airplane, the first real amphibian plane and built the first ship designed for trans-oceanic flight, forerunner of the Navy-Curtiss fleet.

He trained the first mail flyers, demonstrated bombing from aircraft; the sending and receiving of wireless in flight; sharpshooting from a moving ship.

And when America drew the sword in 1917, she relied heavily upon Glenn Curtiss to produce her combat planes. He created the famous "Jennie" in which so many World War I pilots learned to fly.

All these accomplishments were in the infancy of aviation. And most of them had their inception in little Hammondsport.

Glenn Curtiss was an unusual man. He was not impressive in appearance. He was thin and had a prominent Adam's Apple and grew bald early in life. His favorite headgear was a cap with a flaring top. He was shy and modest and dreamy eyed.

A champion motorcycle racer, as well as flyer, he cared nothing for the plaudits of crowds and had not one iota of showmanship in his makeup. He detested ceremony and public speaking was sheer torture. He had no formal engineering education, yet the foremost engineers and scientists sought his advice and followed his roughly drawn plans. A dreamer, always intent on discovering faster and safer ways of travel, he was yet a doer and saw most of his dreams come true. Generous and often the prey of cranks and swindlers, he amassed a fortune.

In his latter days of affluence, he lived in many places, but a square old-fashioned house on a hilltop was home to him and whenever he signed a hotel register, whether in New York or London or the Riveria, it was as "G. H. Curtiss, Hammondsport, N. Y."

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Glenn Curtiss was born in a lake-front cottage in Hammondsport in 1878. His dreamy mother, who liked to dabble in water-colors, named him Glenn after the cool glen where Frank Curtiss courted her, and Hammond, after her native village.

When he was three, Glenn was found playing in a pile of discarded scrap metal in the rear of his father's harness shop. When he was five, his grandfather and father died within a few months of each other. With his mother and sister, he went to live with his grandmother in the house on the hill. His mother remarried and moved to a nearby town but Glenn stayed with Grandma Curtiss, helping tend the steep vineyard and going to school in the village. There he displayed proficiency in mathematics but lagged in English and languages. He read all the technical magazines and showed an absorbing interest in bicycles then coming into vogue.

When he was 15, he left school and went to live with his mother in Rochester. He got a job as a Western Union delivery boy and for a year his bike stood with the others in the rack at the old Reynolds Arcade. After he was laid off in the hard times of '94, he went to work at the then new Kodak Park plant. His job was stenciling red numbers on black rolls of paper and gluing them to films. Irked by the tedious process, he developed a way to increase one man's production from 400 to 4,000 a day. Nevertheless when a business slump came along shortly thereafter, he was laid off. But Kodak kept on using his process.

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The youth went back to Hammondsport and Grandma Curtiss. He worked in the vineyards and did odd repair jobs in the village.



He became a skillful bicycle rider and a racer of local renown, winning prizes at county fairs and other contents.

The quiet lad was popular with the village businessmen and James Smellie Sr., father of the present druggist, backed him in opening a little bicycle repair shop on the square. A few years ago, that historic shop was devoured by flames. Old timers, who were boys then, remember how Curtiss used to make kites for them, kites that would fly higher than any others. They recall, too, that Glenn had the first coaster brake in Hammondsport.

At the age of 20, he married a local girl, Lena Neff, and they lived with Grandma Curtiss. He started selling bicycles, as well as repairing them. He opened branches in other villages and finally started selling a machine of his own concoction under the trade name of Hercules.

Curtiss was never satisfied with the mechanical status quo. He attached a motor to his bicycle and tinkered with it until he had developed enough power to make the steep grades around the village. Then he began making motorcycle engines and opened a shop of his own in 1901. He kept the old name Hercules and raced his own motorcycles all over the country. The slender retiring youth in black sweater and woolen tights became a familiar figure at all the big races. He won two world's records and Hammondsport was very proud of him, indeed.

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In 1903, the same year that the Wright Brothers made aviation history on the sands of Kitty Hawk, N. C., Capt. Thomas Baldwin, parachute inventor, visited Hammondsport. He was the first of a long line of notables to seek out Glenn Curtiss.

Among them were Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, Lincoln Beachey, Harold McCormick, to name a few. And there was a young Navy lieutenant, "Jack" Towers. Now he is Admiral Towers, a king-pin of Uncle Sam's Navy.

But to return to "Cap" Baldwin and 1903. He came because he wanted a better motor for the balloon he was building and young Curtiss already had a name in the trade as an outstanding maker of light engines. Then strange gas bags were seen floating over the hills and gulleys. Airship men came from afar to get Curtiss engines to drive their balloons. The United States government ordered one—its first timid step in the path of military aeronautics.

Meanwhile in Washington, scientist Samuel Langley had made unsuccessful attempts to fly a mechanical airplane. His failure sent aviation's stock to a low ebb despite the Wrights' epic achievement in making a flight at Kitty Hawk.

But one man in America, a distinguished one, had faith in man's ability to fly. He was Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone. He heard of Curtiss and his engines. Hammondsport came to know the tall, bearded scientist well. For Dr. Bell and three other air pioneers founded at Hammondsport the Aerial Experimental Association, with Curtiss as director of experiments. Associates in the enterprise were Lieut. Thomas Selfridge, U. S. Army; "Casey" Baldwin and John McCurdy.

There was much hammering in the Curtiss shop by day and conferences every night in the cupola room of the Curtiss homestead. First they concentrated on gliders but soon switched to power machines.

As a result, on Mar. 2, 1908, a crate-like contraption with a single thickness of red silk covering its two kite-like wings, with beams and struts built of spruce, and with a 24-horsepower, eight-cylinder Curtiss motor, was carefully placed on the flat top of a grape-hauling barge, three miles up Keuka Lake. There the ice was thicker than at the head of the lake. This machine was "The Red Wing." With Casey Baldwin at the controls, the thing took off, sputtering, and actually flew 318 feet. Then it capsized on the ice, like a wounded hen. But history had been made. It was the first flight in the Empire State.



The group then produced the White Wings, with varnished cotton wings, instead of silk, and flew it 1,266 feet.

On July 4, 1908, the slopes of Pleasant Valley adjoining the Stony Brook Farm race track of Harry Champlin, the wine magnate, were black with people. The whole countryside was there, as well as some air-minded notables from New York. The magazine, *Scientific American*, had offered a trophy for the first American pilot to fly one kilometer. Curtiss and his associates had accepted the challenge and had built a new ship, the June Bug.

The crowd waited for hours with growing impatience. Curtiss would not fly "until the wind was right." There was a streak of Yankee caution, mixed with courage, in his makeup. Finally as the shadows began to lengthen over the vineyards, he took off in the crate-like June Bug. He flew for nearly a mile and the cup was his. Hammondsport had seen the first public, pre-announced airplane flight in America.

Curtiss' prestige soared. The little shop near his home, that had started in 1901 with three men, was employing 100.

Experiments were shifted to Lake Keuka as being less hazardous than flying over plowed fields and vineyards studded with stakes. The June Bug, renamed the Loon, was fitted with pontoons and alighted many times on the quiet waters of the Crooked Lake. That was the real birth of naval aviation.

The association dissolved and Curtiss carried on alone, never making much money but constantly trying out new ideas. In 1909 he received the first order for an airplane ever given an American manufacturer. He flew it 19 times around a closed circuit at Mineola. Hitherto, all flights had been straightaway.

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August of 1909 saw his greatest hour of glory. With many misgivings, Glenn Curtiss took with him across the Atlantic his own Hammondsport-made plane, as he would a trunk or other baggage. He was the only American entrant in the International speed race



for the James Gordon Bennett trophy. The meet was held in Rheims, France, in a grape-growing country reminiscent of Curtiss' own Pleasant Valley.

It was a glittering show. The President of France, the American ambassador, titled Europeans were there. Curtiss paid them little heed. He was dragged, protesting from the hangar where he had been fussing with his motor in shirt sleeves, to pose for a picture with symmetrical Anna Held, the reigning siren of the day.

The lean, diffident American won against the pick of Europe's bird-men. He was lionized abroad. On his return to New York a great banquet was given him. Curtiss hated that sort of thing. He stammered a few words at the banquet and sat down.

When, the next evening, his train arrived at Bath, in a drizzle, a brass band and virtually all the countryside were on hand to greet him. A 20-man team pulled his carriage through Hammondsport's muddy streets, under a hastily built arch of triumph, up the hill to the square old house, ablaze with lights. The village went all out in that welcome home.

Curtiss kept on experimenting and making aviation history. He made the \$10,000 one stop-flight along the Hudson from Albany to New York that electrified the nation. He instructed Army and Navy officers in airplane design and operation. Then the Wright Brothers, backed by immense capital, started their long patent litigation, centering around alleged infringement of lateral controls. This dragged on for years, to Curtiss' great financial and mental distress. Injunctions virtually halted his manufacturing operations.

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In 1911 he opened the first flying school in America at Hammondsport. He organized the Curtiss Exhibition Circus. His flyers, intrepid barnstormers, flew planes that no self respecting aviator would touch today. They spread the gospel of aviation all over the country. Hammondsport came to know these trail blazers, dauntless stunt flyers like Lincoln Beachey, Beckwith Havens and Eugene Ely.

A Rochester girl, who had made news by driving an automobile across the Continent without male help, came to the school and became the first woman ever to pilot a plane in exhibition flight. Today Blanche Stuart Scott in her Rochester home looks back tenderly on those stirring early days of the Curtiss School and the Flying Circus.

Curtiss went to work on flying boats. Wealthy sportsmen like William Thaw and Harold McCormick came to the village, took lessons and bought planes. At one time 21 of these ships were on the assembly line at the Curtiss shops.

The years of the flying school were the gayest the old town had ever known. The students dashed about the dusty roads in rakish cars; they danced in the pavilions along the lake. There were merry parties at the homes of the wine magnates, parties that Glenn Curtiss did not attend. He was too busy figuring out new ways to revolutionize aviation.

The students came from many lands, Britain, France, Russia, China, Japan. There was even a turbaned Hindu. Many of those who learned to fly beside Keuka water became pilots and instructors in World War I.

One of the Jap students was killed while trying an experiment of his own. And Hammondsport still remembers with horror the summer day in 1913 when Lincoln Beachey's experimental plane got out of control, hit the ridge of a hangar where a crowd was perched and killed a girl outright.

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The fateful year 1914 found the village swarming with newspapermen and notables. Curtiss was building a flying boat, The America, designed to span the Atlantic. Rodman Wanamaker was the sponsor and the whole business was shrouded in secrecy. A \$50,000 prize was at stake.

Jim Smellie Jr., remembers those hestic days. He and a rival druggist down the street, W. A. Hoyt, a fine old gentleman, who, by



the way, is still there, operated rival telegraph offices. They were snowed under by copy from the typewriters of the horde of New York reporters. One of them was Herbert Bayard Swope.

Smellie also recalls how in the early days, when a young lad, he risked his life by lying flat on his back to snap a picture of a pioneer Curtiss "crate" in flight directly over him. For which he received the sum of 50 cents from a big city newspaper!

The building of the flying boat drew the eyes of the world on Hammondsport. Word leaked out that the flight was to be made from New Foundland to the Azores. The plane was taken to Canada for the takeoff. Then an Austrian archduke was slain in a Balkan city, the world went to war and The America never flew.

That same year the pioneer Langley plane was brought to Hammondsport to be reconditioned and flown in a scientific demonstration that aroused some furor at the time. William Elwood (Gink) Doherty, still a resident of Hammondsport, recalls flying the ancient model over Lake Keuka. Later on, Doherty and Harry Bailey went to Europe during World War I; Doherty to demonstrate Curtiss combat planes and Bailey as mechanic. Today each has a son in the uniforms of the U. S. Air Forces overseas. Bailey's son is a prisoner of the Nazis.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the first World War broke, Curtiss was busy on two types of flying boats and a tractor biplane. The latter was for the U. S. Signal Corps and evolved into the famous JN or "Jenny," in which so many World War flyers were trained.

The war brought an immediate boom to Hammondsport. A \$14,000,000 order came from the British Navy. There were smaller orders from France and the United States.

Upon our entry into the war, the patent fight was compromised and Curtiss set about building warplanes in a big way. The industry had outgrown Hammondsport. Curtiss bought and built huge factories in Buffalo.



Hammondsport experienced her greatest boom. The plant there employed 3,000 men, three times the normal population of the village. Housing facilities there and at Bath were overtaxed. Men slept in relays. National Guardsmen policed the plant day and night. Planes ferried parts between Hammondsport and Buffalo. Those were roaring days along the Crooked Lake.

The Armistice ended the aviation boom. Prohibition crippled the grape industry. Curtiss, now a rich man, did his best to keep things going. But the village slowly sank into pleasant slumber.

Curtiss traveled much but spent all the time he could in the old homestead and still called Hammondsport his home.

One July day in 1930 news came from Buffalo that stunned the village. Curtiss was dead after an appendicitis operation. He had been thought on the road to recovery.

They brought Glenn Curtiss back to Pleasant Valley, to sleep near the scene of his early triumphs. For a day Hammondsport again was the aviation center of the nation. From far and near came famous aviators, scientists, industrialists. Many of them came in airplanes and they dipped their wings low over the valley of aviation's nativity.

In the crowd were men with calloused hands who had worked for Glenn Curtiss when his shop was small and who had shared his early triumphs and his sorrows. There were white haired townspeople and farmers from the hills, who had watched the boy who could fix bicycles and repair door bells rise to the pinnacle of world fame.

There was real sorrow in their ranks. Hammondsport was proud of Glenn Curtiss as a world figure. It also was fond of him as A MAN.

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The sturdy old yellow frame house that he called home for so many years still stands on the hill, moved back a bit to make way for a splendid Curtiss Memorial School on the site of the old air-

craft factory. The homestead now houses the home service department of the school. The cupola where Curtiss and Bell and the other pioneers met of nights so long ago, is fittingly a post for air raid spotters. The new school has an aircraft vocational training department which teaches all the modern trends in technical design and operation, instruction that was not available when Curtiss was a boy in Hammondsport, tinkering with motors in the back room of Smellie's drug store.

Hammondsport is still air minded. The Mercury Aircraft factory beside the lake carries on the Curtiss tradition, its production attuned to war.

But there is not even an historical marker to tell where Glenn Curtiss drove the June Bug to glory 35 years ago in the first public airplane flight in America.

Hammondsport for years has been fighting for a state memorial airport there.

And why not?

Is it not the Cradle of Aviation?

\* \* \* \* \*

*"But many a Ruby still kindles in the Vine,  
And many a Garden by the Water blows."*

---

Omar Khayyam would have felt at home around Hammondsport.

He would have thrilled to Keuka's sapphire radiance and to the glory of the far blue hills. He would have enjoyed climbing those fecund slopes to smell the fragrance of the grapes ripening, row on row, in the warm, fall sunshine.

The Old Tentmaker would have liked the serene old village too. He could sit in its shady square and meditate or stroll along its quiet streets, "where many a Garden by the Water blows."

But most of all, he would have loved the cool, cavernous depths of the great, stone-walled wine cellars, some of them set, like baronial castles, back into the hillsides. There he could see the trucks roll up, piled high with sweet Delawares, Catawbas, Concords, Elviras, Isabellas. Maybe he would have fashioned a verse about them. He would have liked the jolly wine makers, their white coveralls stained a gaudy purple. He would have been fascinated by the huge vats and casks, the myriad rows of bottles on the racks. And the all-pervading, heady odor of the Grape in ferment would have warmed his convivial soul.

There is the air of an older world about this countryside, where the days are warm and sunny and the nights are clear and cool and where, in consequence, the grapes are the sweetest grown.

Perhaps a reincarnated Omar, sojourning in this land of sparkling nectar, would have forgotten his urge to "remould the world a little nearer to the heart's desire."

The Tentmaker might have found his Never Never Land in Hammondsport.

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The grape industry around the Crooked Lake had its beginning in an Episcopal rector's garden. Around 1840, the Rev. William Bostwick of Hammondsport sent to the Hudson Valley for slips of the Isabella and Catawba varieties. He planted them on the rectory grounds and they flourished in the saintly soil—forerunners of a mighty industry.

The good rector did not commercialize his vineyard but others heard of his success and did. In 1847 the first shipment of Keuka grapes, 50 pounds, went to the New York market. They were grown by William Hastings on a terraced vineyard of less than an acre, overlooking the lake. The next year he shipped 200 pounds of Isabella grapes to the big city. That "broke the market." Hastings ceased his shipments but made his grapes into wine, largely sold for sacramental purposes.



In 1857 J. M. Prentiss shipped a ton of grapes from his Pulteney farm. More and more farmers began planting their hillsides to vines until in 1860 there were 200 acres of vineyards around the lake.

That year the French vintner, Charles D. Champlin, came to Pleasant Valley. He had discovered that this Western New York countryside closely paralleled the famous vineyard region around Rheims, France, in climate, soil and drainage and was ideal for the growing of wine grapes.

It was blessed with an abundance of sunshine in the maturing months a minimum of insects and fungi. The hills provided a natural shelter, the fall winds that blew over Keuka were warm and the frosts came late. All these factors made the grapes grown in this "American Rhineland" of high sugar content.

In 1861 Champlin established the first winery in Pleasant Valley and was granted U. S. Winery License No. 1. Four years later he began the manufacture of champagne. Since then the great bulk of wine champagne produced in the nation, at times 90 per cent of it, has come from the Hammondsport area.

For 84 years there has been a Champlin in Pleasant Valley. There is a Charles D. Champlin now, third of his line. And until recently there has been a Masson as chief wine maker ever since Jules Masson came from his native Burgundy with the first Charles Champlin. The Champlins called the postoffice established near their winery, Rheims, after the Old World wine center, which is in the same parallel of latitude.

The next winery was the Urbana, which began in 1865 and is still operating along the lake. The present Taylor Bros. cellars were founded by the late Walter Taylor in 1880. With D. W. Putnam, up and coming grape juice manufacturer, the three pioneers today constitute the Big Four of the industry. There are two other wineries and a brandy distillery in operation. In all, some 500 workers are employed.

All about the village stand picturesque old stone wine cellars, now abandoned. They are relics of the vanished era of small business.

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The industry thrived after the Civil War. In 1889 there were 14,000 acres of vineyards that produced 17,000 tons of table grapes and 718,000 gallons of wine. In the late 1890's the acreage had reached 25,000. The products of the Keuka wineries received gold medals and ribbons from Paris exhibitions and other world competitions.

In those days six steamboats and many tow barges hauled tons of grapes down the lake in the fall and sometimes six freight trains a day rumbled out of Hammondsport on the ten-mile long Bath and Hammondsport Railroad. The little road is still in operation and its red cabooses still bear the legend, "The Champagne Route."

After World War I, prohibition struck a staggering blow at the wine industry. Now, a decade after repeal, the vineyards have not been restored to 70 per cent of the pre-dry era acreage.

The new generation is showing a disinclination to raise grapes as its fathers did. More and more vineyards are neglected and abandoned as their owners yield to the lure of high wages in the war plants. As a result the wineries are operating many vineyards themselves. Last fall when help was scarce the wine men sent their employes out into the harvest.

Vineyarding entails plenty of work and eternal vigilance. Plowing, dragging, fertilizing, spraying against pests, hoeing, trimming of vines, replacing and driving posts, tying the shoots with willow twigs to keep them straight and later on, the main vines with straw binding—these are some of the routine operations that rob grape raising of glamor.

The harvest is a stupendous affair. Armies of men and women invade the vineyards, cutting the clusters from the vines with knives



and shears and putting them in 40 pound boxes to be trucked to the wine cellars.

There, after the pressing and early fermentation processes, the juice is bottled. Champagne making is a four-year process. The bottles rest on their sides for a year before being put on racks and the sediment removed. Brandy syrup is added to give the proper sweetness. The bottles are corked and wired and put on shelves where they are turned—by hand twice a day for a year. One man turns thousands of bottles daily and he does it deftly indeed, using both hands at the same time.

The cool, vaulted wine cellars are intriguing places, with their mammoth 7,000 gallon storage tanks, miles of pyrex tube that carry the crimson liquid from one process to another, huge rooms stacked with bottles. I was told that at certain stages of the fermentation process, workers wear masks, like fencers, to protect their faces against possible explosion of the bottles.

Her position as the Vineyard Capital has given Hammondsport distinctiveness. She is unlike any other town in the Lakes Country. Her wine cellars have generated an open-hearted, expansive way of life along Keuka's shores. And men who work in sunny vineyards have a less circumscribed horizon than farmers who grub for a bare existence in the stony hills.

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In an old building along the lake, an interesting and important experiment is . . . being conducted in these wartime years. It houses the Tartrates Recovery Corporation, which extracts valuable chemicals from the residues of wine making.

Tartrates are important in war and peace. They are used in making smokeless powder, in boring big naval guns, in the manufacture of rayon, medicines, effervescent salts, dyeing textiles and in coating mirrors.

Wineries are the only source of tartrates, obtained from wine lees, argols and pomace. Prior to the present war, 90 per cent of



them were imported from France and Spain. The outbreak of the conflict shut off the supply.

Ralph F. Celmer, young chemist for Taylor Bros. and a former aide at the State Agricultural Experiment station at Geneva, for some time had been studying the tartrate recovery problem. Right after Pearl Harbor, he began urging their extraction as vital to the war effort.

In this he received the fullest cooperation from the Keuka wine men. In November, 1942, the Tartrate Recovery Corp. came into being, with Champlin, the Taylors and Putnam financing the project and equipping the plant, and with Celmer in charge of operations. The War Production Board encouraged the experiment by granting priorities.

The plant processes 50 tons of residue a week to extract two tons of the precious tartrates. After the chemicals are recovered from grape, pomace and stems, the balance is valuable as fertilizer. The wine lees and filet cake, after extraction of tartrates, are still rich in yeast and solids which go into hog feed and when dried, make satisfactory chicken feed.

Because of the poor yield of last fall and the WFA ruling freezing grapes, the demand for tartrates now exceeds the supply tenfold. So Ralph Celmer in his laboratory is experimenting with synthetic methods.

This experiment at Hammondsport is worth watching. Perhaps, after the war, it will result in the development of a new American industry, no longer dependent on foreign supplies.

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Nature, as well as the wineries and the aviation industry, has lent distinction to Hammondsport. Her setting of blue lake and mighty hills charms the visitor. But few ever see or hear of her glen. This cleft in the hills, with its fifteen cascades and a cool, shadowy natural "Cathedral," is a miniature Watkins Glen. Once it was a popular resort for the neighborhood.

In July, 1935, the greatest cloudburst in history fell upon the Finger Lakes region. Down through Hammondsport's romantic glen raced fierce flood torrents. They uprooted century-old trees, inundated streets and cellars, wrought heavy property damage.

The waters swirled into a distillery, then under federal custody, and carried out many kegs of brandy and some of pomace. The barrels floated out into the streets. Villagers in rowboats and hip boots gathered them in. The wise ones knew that the barrels that floated high on the water contained good brandy and that those wallowing lower in the current housed only unpotable pomace. All of them disappeared. When the federal men came in the wake of the flood to check their stores, they questioned the villagers about the missing barrels. They were met with blank stares. Nobody knew anything.

That same flood ruined a useful landmark, the Frozen Well, where the temperature of the water was constant at 34 degrees. This icy vein was discovered when picnic grounds were being laid out along the lake. A deep well was driven and a pump was installed. William Chadeayne, aircraft manufacturer, built a well curb, inlaid with beautifully colored broken glass from the Corning Works. Cottagers and villagers came with their jugs for the pure, cold water. But the flood covered up the well. After that the water was never any colder than that from an ordinary well.

In Pleasant Valley, where for 50 years the state's Cold Spring Fish Hatchery has been breeding fingerlings, a fountain that spurts out icy water is famous for miles around.

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Where else but in surprising little Hammondsport would one run across two famous and historic locomotives that were actors in the Railroads on Parade pageant of the New York World's Fair?

Beside the lake, on the tracks of the Bath and Hammondsport line, stands "Old 952," an engine of the Mother Hubbard or Wootten type, common some 40 years ago. This type is distinctive



in that the cab is at the rear of the tender. This separation of engineer and fireman was abandoned as impractical long ago, but the old timer at Hammondsport once hauled the proud Lackawanna Limited and was seen by thousands at the World's Fair.

In a shed nearby, under lock and key, is another relic of the rails. This engine, built in 1871, represented the famous Jupiter at the fair. It was made into a replica of the earlier Central Pacific engine that hauled the private car of Leland Stanford, president of the road, to the "Wedding of the Rails" at Promontory, Utah, in 1869. The old shed at Hammondsport also houses a replica of the Stanford private coach.

The union of the East and the West through a transcontinental rail line was a milestone in American history. The Central Pacific, built by a horde of Chinese coolies, crawled eastward over the mountains from San Francisco. The Union Pacific, pride of Granville Dodge and the Casemonts, crept toward the setting sun from Council Bluffs, Iowa. Rough and ready Irish emigrants and veterans of the Civil War, from both North and South, built the UP. They had to bridge swiftly running rivers, hew down virgin forests, tunnel through mountain walls with pickaxes. They had to fight hostile Indians, too, and finally the Federal troops came to drive away the Redskins.

Despite all these obstacles the two ribbons of steel, more than 1,700 miles long, met in Utah on May 10, 1869. Two cowcatchers touched, bands played and top hatted Leland Stanford drove a golden spike to mark the union of East and West.

How did these historic treasures find their way to Hammondsport? To get the answer, I sought out Edward Hungerford, America's foremost authority on railroads and the director of the World's Fair pageant, at his Pittsford home.

The answer is simple. When the Fair closed its gates and a movement for a permanent national railroad museum in New York



City failed, the pageant collection was broken up and most of the exhibit returned to the railroads.

The Mother Hubbard, the Jupiter and the Stanford car are the property of the Railway Locomotive Historical Society of which Hungerford is a director and a moving spirit. For safe keeping, until such time as the dream of the society, a national railroad museum, comes true, they are stored at Hammondsport. That site was selected because of the keen interest in railway lore of Charles D. Champlin, the wine magnate.

And that is why a bit of the great World's Fair, metal landmarks in transportation history, now repose beside Keuka's waters in a village that has but one railroad—and that a ten mile line.

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There are many memories of an older Hammondsport that linger in gray heads. Those who were boys and girls in the village at the turn of the century will remember the lamplighter who made the rounds morning and night. In the morning he would blow out the lamps, clean the chimneys with paper, trim the wicks and fill the lamps with kerosene. At night he would return to light them and the young folks would watch for him as did the lad in Robert Louis Stevenson's old poem, "The Lamplighter."

In those days there was a curfew that sent them scurrying to the home firesides at 8 p. m. on winter nights and 9 p. m. in the summertime.

Old Orchestrion Hall is gone from its terraced hillside overlooking the town. It was remodeled into a dwelling and garage more than a decade ago. Once it was a favorite rendezvous for dancing feet and the great music box throbbed far into the night. The orchestrion, resembling a barrel organ with stops imitating a variety of musical instruments, cost \$12,000 and was installed with gala ceremonies in 1876.

Hammondsport has a barber shop, which because of its social aspects, bears on its windows the sign "Gents' Club."

For her inhabitants are gregarious people.

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Hammondsport in the shadow of the hills was my last port of call on my swing around seven lakes in six counties.

As I said farewell to the Lakes Country, a fire-red sun was slowly sinking over Keuka's waters. Its dying glory was reflected, like a benediction, on the silken bosom of the lake.

For ten days I had kept a rendezvous with beauty.

The shores of the slim, blue lakes are the more beautiful because they have been moistened with blood and sweat and tears.

That they and their children might live at peace in this fair land, an indomitable generation fought the savages, wild beasts, the wilderness, the treacherous elements, awful loneliness and bitter want.

*It still is worth fighting for!*

THE END









